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Erfurt School of Public Policy

Careers with the EU

A study on recruitment strategies and qualification requirements of the institutions of the European Union



Professional Education for International Organizations

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Executive Summary (English)

The following report gives an overview of the results that were obtained in the PROFIO study on recruitment strategies and qualification requirements at the EU institutions. To achieve the objectives of the PROFIO project a multi-method-approach - a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods - was applied. With regard to the educational background of the employees in the professional category, this study has identified that the subjects studied most often were foreign languages, law, political science, business and economics, and international studies. These subjects – and particularly the combination of law and political science – were mentioned as a good preparation for careers in the EU institutions. Furthermore, this study has shown that the employees rated their university education as important in providing them with the skills and qualifications – especially analytical skills and detailed knowledge on EU processes and institutions – needed for passing the recruitment competitions and their current field of work. Solely management skills, language skills, IT/computer skills and communications skills were mentioned as lacking from university education. To equip students with the skills and competences needed to perform the various task at the EU institutions, the employees recommended that universities should pay sufficient attention to skills development, and ensure the practical as well as professional orientation in learning by involving practitioners in the actual teaching process as well as in the development and evaluation of the curricular. Active and problem-based teaching methods should be applied to develop basic skills and competences. Concerning the recruitment process, this study has shown that the the selection procedures (interviews and tests), the inter-institutional recruitment and human resource policies in general were criticized.

Executive Summary (Deutsch)

Dieser Bericht gibt einen Überblick über die Ergebnisse der PROFIO-Studie über Rekrutierungsprozesse und Qualifikationsanforderungen bei den EU-Institutionen. Um die Zielstellungen des Forschungsprojekts zu erreichen, wurde eine Kombination qualitativer und quantitativer Forschungsmethoden angewandt. In Hinblick auf den Bildungshintergrund der Mitarbeiter des höheren Dienstes konnte diese Studie aufzeigen, dass die am häufigsten studierten Fächer Fremdsprachen, Politikwissenschaften, Recht, Wirtschaftswissenschaften und internationale Beziehungen sind. Diese Fächer – und insbesondere die Kombination von Recht und Politikwissenschaften – wurden als gute Vorbereitung für eine Karriere in den EU-Institutionen angesehen. Außerdem stellte diese Studie heraus, dass die Mitarbeiter ihre Universitätsausbildung als wichtig in Hinblick darauf bewerten, dass diese sie mit den Fähigkeiten und Qualifikationen – insbesondere mit analytischen Fähigkeiten und detaillierten EU-Kenntnissen – ausgestattet hat, die für das Bestehen des Concours sowie ihre aktuelle Tätigkeit von Bedeutung sind. Allerdings wurde bemerkt, dass es in der Universitätsausbildung an der Vermittlung von Management- und Führungskompetenzen, Sprachen- und IT/Computerkenntnissen sowie Kommunikationsfähigkeiten mangelte. Um den Studenten die Fähigkeiten und Kompetenzen zu vermitteln, die sie benötigen, um die vielfältigen Aufgaben in den EU-Institutionen ausführen zu können, empfahlen die Mitarbeiter, dass Universitäten ausreichend Augenmerk auf die Entwicklung von Fähigkeiten und Kompetenzen legen sowie eine praktische sowie professionelle Ausrichtung in der Ausbildung ermöglichen sollten durch Einbezug von Praktikern in Lehrprozesse sowie in die Entwicklung und Evaluierung von Ausbildungsprogrammen. Aktive und problemorientierte Lehrmethoden sollten angewandt werden, um grundlegende Fähigkeiten und Kompetenzen zu entwickeln. In Hinblick auf die Rekrutierungsstrategien konnte die Studie aufzeigen, dass die Auswahlprozesse (Interviews und Tests), die interinstitutionelle Rekrutierung sowie die Personalpolitik im Allgemeinen kritisiert wurden.

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1 Introduction

Since July 2004, the Erfurt School of Public Policy has been carrying out a research project called “Professional Education for International Organizations,” or PROFIO for short. This project aims to find out which skills and competences are necessary for careers at international organizations and how these can be acquired in one’s university education.

Taking into consideration the continual increase in international integration and Germany’s great responsibility in foreign political affairs, the question arises as to what extent Germany is prepared to become involved in international cooperation. A prerequisite for effective involvement is not only the budgetary contribution, but also the ability to send qualified personnel to international organizations that is prepared for the most challenging tasks and leadership positions. However, relative to its high budgetary contributions, Germany remains underrepresented in terms of the number of its professional personnel at many international organizations. The research project PROFIO examines success determinants and educational programs for careers with international organizations. The main goals of the project are as follows:

- an analysis of the recruiting techniques of a sample of international organizations with regard to the qualification profiles and factors determining the success of applicants and staff,
- an analysis of the educational and professional backgrounds of employees in the professional category at these international organizations,
- an examination of German and foreign educational opportunities that are classified as being especially helpful for one’s career,
- the creation of a model for the ideal educational offerings, including extracurricular activities.

To attain these diverse goals, PROFIO applies different methods. One central tool is the carrying out of qualitative interviews with human resources directors, staff responsible for recruitment and regular employees. Second, quantitative surveys aim to shed light on the educational and professional backgrounds of people that are working in international organizations.

One of the main objectives of the PROFIO study of the European Union was to collect detailed information about the educational and professional background of employees in the EU institutions. The intent was to investigate whether there are any patterns in the education or skills of successful employees in the EU institutions. Another objective is to gain insight into

the recruitment policies and selection processes. The employees' opinions on the personnel selection competitions and procedures are of particular interest in this case. Another aim was to gather useful recommendations for educational institutions on how to best prepare students for careers at EU institutions. In order to do this, employees and successful candidates who volunteered to participate were interviewed in Brussels by the PROFIO research team. These included, in the end, employees of the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, and primarily the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union.

Various studies of the EU's personnel structures and recruiting policies predate this one, as the EU is a very popular object of research. One report of particular relevance to this project is a report on the presence of German staff in the European Commission coauthored by Beate Neuss and Wolfram Hilz. Written in 1999, it provided the impetus for many of the reforms and discussions in the field of German personnel policy toward international organizations in recent years. Similar to the PROFIO project, its focus was on the actual ways in which employees are recruited and promoted in the professional category. Its conclusions, however, dealt primarily with determining the causes of the comparatively low number of Germans in the Commission and with proposing solutions to improve this situation. One could say that PROFIO is contributing to the further development of these proposals – specifically to the suggestion that students should be better informed about career opportunities and application requirements at the EU. The authors mention the great potential that lies in the reform of higher education and particularly in the creation of bachelor and master degree programs. PROFIO is therefore the logical next step in the process of improving applicants' chances of being hired by the EU.

Furthermore, the optimization of the education and training for careers at the EU has been a major topic of discussion among students, instructors, and EU practitioners for many years. In 1976, the Collège d'Europe in Bruges hosted a large conference on how to best educate European civil servants with guest speakers from several EU institutions and member states. More recently, in the wake of the Maastricht round of treaty reforms and Austria's accession to the EU, the Austrian Federal Academy of Public Administration also held a series of talks on the impacts that European integration has on education in the field of public administration. Now, programs in European studies are widespread, and workshops and other meetings often take place for those involved in educating people on EU affairs to discuss what it means to have "European competency" and how this can best be acquired. This is an ongoing debate which shall not be reconstructed in this report, but which one can keep in mind while reading.

This study was developed to combine the two issues mentioned above and to provide insight about both ends of the process: What does the EU look for when hiring people, and how can applicants prepare themselves accordingly? The strength of the PROFIO project is that it

provides both breadth and depth. It successfully combines a wide range of research subjects with in-depth questions on various aspects of employment with the European Union. The goal is to state where there is room for improvement and propose concrete measures for change.

There are various reasons why the PROFIO research team chose to examine the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union (hereafter referred to as the GSC) in greater detail than any of the other EU institutions. One is that the recruiting mechanisms and personnel structures of the European Commission have already been the focus of various studies in recent years.¹ The GSC, on the other hand, had not yet been examined. Despite the major difference in staff numbers (see Table 1), the GSC is an organ of ever-greater influence. Its powers increase, for example, with every enlargement round. It has a growing need for personnel in the areas of foreign and security policy due to the development of a common policy at the EU level in this field. The Presidencies have come to expect more political input from the GSC than they did in the past, and another important function is to resolve political logjams in negotiations. Furthermore, the GSC has become operative as with its police operations or “civil crisis management”, as they are called. It is also responsible for very large budgets and for writing important legal appraisals.

This report is structured as follows. First, the institutions at which the participants in the PROFIO study are employed will be briefly described so as to assist the reader in understanding the variety of tasks and responsibilities EU employees can have. The relevant provisions in the Staff Regulations will be presented in the context of recruitment and promotion procedures as well as the post category structure and terms of employment besides permanent positions. Also, the means with which Germany attempts to increase the number of its nationals working for the EU institutions will be covered. Following an explanation of the procedures and methodology used in this study, the results will be the final major section. This is where the answers from all the qualitative interviews and the online survey will be analyzed and compared to each other in order to come to plausible conclusions about the skills EU employees need to perform their tasks and whether these abilities are effectively taught at institutions of higher education. Finally, recommendations to future applicants as well as for universities will be drawn from the results in order to provide clear and useful information to those interested in careers at the EU.

¹ Cf. Neuss, B. and W. Hilz (1999). Deutsche personelle Präsenz in der EU-Kommission, TU Chemnitz: 111, and Bleinroth, M. (2001). "Förderung deutscher Präsenz in der Europäischen Kommission: Peer Review -- Probleme -- Empfehlungen." Retrieved August 16, 2004, from http://www.berlinerinitiative.de/materialien/2001_europa.pdf.

2 The institutions of the European Union

2.1 Political powers and structural entities

This report shall not attempt to provide a comprehensive description of the roles and functions of each of the institutions of the European Union² (EU) included in this study, as there is a great deal of literature available on this topic. Instead, it will give a brief summary of the similarities and differences between the powers and structures of the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union, the European Commission, the European Parliament, and the Committee of the Regions in order to give a basic idea of the types of careers available in each one. Table X shows the current distribution of employees includes not only the professionals (the focus of our study) but rather employees in the AST (Assistant) category as well:

	<i>Permanent</i>	<i>Temporary</i>
Commission	16,982	406
Research institutions etc	5,582	352
Specialized agencies	2,043	53
Council of Ministers	2,535	51
Parliament	4,512	118
Court of Justice	1,248	393
Court of Auditors	509	91
ESC and Committee of the Regions	977	36
Total	34,388	1,500

Table 1: EU employees, end of 2004³

Originally intended for translation, minute-taking, and legal services, a very small secretariat to the Special Council of the European Coal and Steel Community was established in Luxembourg in 1952. The personnel started out at a total of thirty people with only five staff members at professional (AD) level.⁴ Today, the figure is over 3,000 for all employees and nearly 500 for AD grade professionals. (The European Commission, in contrast, boasts a staff of more than 24,000.) Also, the roles of the General Secretariat have changed a great deal over time. It has continued to acquire new responsibilities and gain political significance, especially when it comes to decision-making in the EU. Martin Westlake distinguishes between three so-called “traditional functions” (providing logistics services, taking minutes and keeping records, and offering legal advice) and five “new roles”. The latter tasks include assistance in the negotiating process, giving political counsel to the Presidency, mediation between the legislative institutions, representation of the EU in foreign policy matters, and coordinating military and

² In this report, the term “European Union” will be used rather than “European Communities”.

³ Leonard, D. (2005). Guide to the European Union: The definitive guide to all aspects of the EU. London, Profile Books Ltd., p. 90.

⁴ Hayes-Renshaw, Fiona; Wallace, Helen. (1997). The Council of Ministers. St.Martin’s Press: New York, p. 102.

civilian crisis management operations.⁵ Particularly the last two roles pose a great challenge to the General Secretariat, and it may take several years before all the necessary structures, staff, and procedures are in place to coordinate these activities. The administrative organization of the General Secretariat is not arranged according to its different tasks but rather in two cabinets, eight Directorates-General, and a legal service (see Appendix 1).

Despite the variety of Directorates-General (DGs), each of which deals with a different policy area, 87 percent of the Secretariat's staff is primarily involved in organizing conferences, while the other thirteen percent has the task of servicing the political committees.⁶ Furthermore, the DGs are far from having a well-balanced number of employees in each: DG A employs more than all the rest combined. Its internal structure is comprised of the following divisions:

- Unit for implementation of new staff regulations, and communication policy
- Directorate 1A - Human resources
- Directorate 1B - Personnel and administration
- Directorate 2 - Conferences, organisation, infrastructures, information technology
- Directorate 3 - Translation and document production
- Directorate 4 - Finances

Substantially smaller yet politically far more significant is DG E: responsible for dealing with economic and political external relations of the EU, it employs the most staff of any of the vertical DGs (B through I). More important, it is the only DG that does not exclusively employ permanent officials recruited by open competition. Instead, "it is staffed by a mixture of Secretariat and seconded national officials, reflecting the explicitly intergovernmental nature of its work."⁷

Finally, the General Secretariat employs people with very diverse academic and professional backgrounds. As Westlake and Galloway put it, "there is no standard 'profile' of the typical Council official."⁸ Their college majors range from the classics to medicine, and their prior work areas include education, research, computer programming, banking, and lobbying. This great variety of experience in private companies, public service, and other EU institutions increases the effectiveness and impartiality of the Secretariat's work, which can "prove invaluable in times of protracted negotiation" and "greatly assist not only the Council's internal operation, but the Council's inter-institutional relations in EU policy-making."⁹

⁵ Westlake, Martin; Galloway, David. (2004). *The Council of the European Union*. John Harper Publishing: London, 3rd edition, pp. 348 ff.

⁶ Peterson, John; Shackleton, Michael. (2002). *The Institutions of the European Union*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 60.

⁷ Hayes-Renshaw, Fiona; Wallace, Helen. (1997). *The Council of Ministers*. St.Martin's Press: New York, p. 110.

⁸ Westlake, Martin; Galloway, David. (2004). *The Council of the European Union*. London: John Harper Publishing, 3rd edition, pp. 355-6.

⁹ Sherrington, Phillipa. (2000). *The Council of Ministers: Political Authority in the European Union*. Pinter: London and New York, p. 52.

The European Commission is often referred to as the “watchdog of the treaties” because it has the authority to initiate new legislation, participate in decision-making, and monitor the implementation of laws already in place. Article 211 of the TEC states: “In order to ensure the proper functioning and development of the common market, the Commission shall:

- ensure that the provisions of this Treaty and the measures taken by the institutions pursuant thereto are applied,
- formulate recommendations or deliver opinions on matters dealt with in this Treaty, if it expressly so provides or if the Commission considers it necessary,
- have its own power of decision and participate in the shaping of measures taken by the Council and by the European Parliament in the manner provided for in this Treaty,
- exercise the powers conferred on it by the Council for the implementation of the rules laid down by the latter.”

In addition to its own Secretariat-General and political DGs, the European Commission has a legal service, a publications office, an internal audit service, and various external offices and agencies (see Appendix 1). Similar to the GSC, the European Commission hires people with degrees in various fields. In general, they should be highly competent and able to work flexibly in any one of the DGs. A combination of specialists and generalists are needed; we will describe this in greater detail under the section on recruitment.

As its name suggests, the European Parliament is the legislative body of the EU. Article 192 of the TEC lays down its role: it participates in policymaking where Articles 251 (the codecision procedure) and 252 (the cooperation procedure) apply. It also – though now in very few cases – gives assent or delivers opinions in areas which it has no official decision-making powers. Finally, it shares the right of initiative with the European Commission to some extent in that it may “request the Commission to submit any appropriate proposal on matters which it considers that a Community act is required for the purpose of implementing this Treaty” (Art. 192 TEC). Its structure is similar to a streamlined version of that of the GSC, as there are various secretariats for committees, political groups, and other issues (see Appendix 1).

The Committee of the Regions is a consultative body responsible for giving opinions on issues of relevance to the individual regions within the member states. According to Article 265, it “shall be consulted by the Council or the Commission where this Treaty so provides and in all other cases, in particular those which concern cross-border cooperation, in which one of these two institutions considers it appropriate.” Dick Leonard lists the five areas in which the other institutions must obtain its opinion: “education, vocational training and youth, culture; public health; trans-European networks for transport, telecommunications and energy; [and]

economic and social cohesion.”¹⁰ Of its 317 members, Germany is among the four countries with the most members (24). It shares some of its services with the Economic and Social Committee, such as logistics and translation, but has its own Secretariat-General and Internal Audit Service (see Appendix 1).

2.2 Staff regulations and personnel structures

The “Staff Regulations of Officials of the European Communities” and “Conditions of employment of other servants of the European Communities” are the legal basis for the personnel policies of all the EU institutions. Both documents recently underwent their first major reform. Here, the major stipulations and the aspects of this reform process relevant to this research project will be briefly described.¹¹

First, European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) was established to recruit for all institutions. The goal is to organize all competitions and to inform those interested in working for the EU centrally rather than leaving it up to each of the organs separately, as was done in the past. Second, the “Guidelines for the selection, appointment and appraisal of senior officials” have changed in that promotion should be based on merit (instead of seniority) in the future. The necessary changes to the appraisal system are currently being implemented; in the Commission, at least, it will be based on a system in which employees collect merit points over time. Third, there are specific “Guidelines on mobility” that call for a “non-binding benchmark of two to five years [per position] for all officials”.¹² People with “sensitive” jobs, such as Directors, those who grant subsidies, or people with other great financial responsibilities, must take on new positions from time to time. This measure should ensure that employees do not become tired of their positions but rather continue learning and using various skills throughout their careers. Fourth, the career structure itself has been adjusted from the previous four categories (A/LA, B, C, D) to two so-called “function groups”: AD (administrators) and AST (assistants) (see Table 2). This change will have two major impacts. First, the translators and interpreters (LA or linguistic staff) previously faced difficulties when applying for non-linguistic positions, as there were limitations as to how many former LA employees could work in any one area. Now, however, all linguistic staff will be on equal footing with the A employees and thus qualify for horizontal mobility to political areas as well. Second, the AST employees will have a clear procedure through which they can be promoted to AD positions. This was not as transparent in the

¹⁰ Leonard, D. (2005). *Guide to the European Union: The definitive guide to all aspects of the EU*. London, Profile Books Ltd., pp. 74-75.

¹¹ Comprehensive information on other aspects of working for the European Union, such as the competitions and post categories, is available at http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/personnel_administration/statut/tocen100.pdf.

¹² Source: http://europa.eu.int/comm/reform/2002/chapter02_en.htm#2_2.

past, but now with the creation of a European Administrative School, the necessary training can be offered to those who qualify and are interested in such vertical career movement.

Former grades ¹³	Future grades ¹⁴	Typical title	Responsibilities	Requirement
A1 to A3	AD14 to AD16	General Director, Director	Administrative and advisory Duties	University degree
A4 to A8	AD5 to AD14	Administrator	Administrative and advisory Duties	University degree
LA3 to LA8	AD5 to AD14	Translator, Interpreter	Translators and interpreters	University degree
B1 to B5	AST1 to AST11	Administrative Assistant	Executive and supervisory duties	High school diploma
C1 to C5	AST1 to AST11	Clerical Officer, Secretary, Assistant	Clerical and secretarial duties	High school diploma
D1 to D4	-	Skilled worker, Unskilled worker	Manual and service duties	High school diploma

Table 2: Post categories for employment positions in the EU¹⁵

There are now five seniority steps within each grade except AD16, where there are only three. Employees automatically advance one seniority step every two years until they reach the highest one or are promoted. According to the website that describes the reform measures, "these are degressive - thus rewarding good performance - from 4.2% for progression to the second and third steps, 2.8% to the fourth and 1.4% to the fifth."¹⁶ Previously, there were eight steps per grade, and moving to the next higher one meant a pay raise of 4.5%.¹⁷

In the following, some of the duties people have in their jobs as EU public servants will be described. As many of the administrative tasks are similar to those in other organizations or companies, it will include only the major positions specific to the European Union. After that, a brief overview of the various types of employment available at the EU Institutions will follow.

Those who work in the political DGs and many of the other offices or units involved in the political process may perform one or more of the following tasks on a daily basis:

Participation in the legislative process: The path a proposal must take to become law is a long, drawn-out one in the EU. Countless people in the EU institutions, the member

¹³ Lower numbers denote higher positions.

¹⁴ Higher numbers denote higher positions.

¹⁵ This report does not mention the provisional post categories because they came into effect on May 1, 2004 and will be replaced by the future post categories as of May 1, 2006.

¹⁶ Source: http://europa.eu.int/comm/reform/2002/chapter02_en.htm#3_5.

¹⁷ Stevens, A. (2001). *Brussels Bureaucrats? The Administration of the European Union*. New York, Palgrave, p. 97.

states, non-governmental organizations, and other agencies take part in each step. Proposals must be drafted, evaluated, revised, distributed to all actors involved, negotiated, and decided according to the established procedures.

Monitoring the implementation and proper execution of legislation: Even after laws are passed, the EU must ensure that the member states, companies, or individuals concerned implement and abide by them. There are people responsible for overseeing the member states' progress in transposing EU directives into national law, interpreting or applying legislation, and investigating reports of infractions.

Political dialogue: This heading simply refers to the massive amount of communication that goes on between the many players in decision-making procedures and cannot be completely distinguished from the first set of tasks described. It is, however, important to mention how much time and effort goes into organizing working groups and committees, lobbying for more resources, discussing and setting agendas, and agreeing amendment possibilities that benefit all parties involved.

As mentioned above, each institution has its own unit or service for translation and interpretation. There is a trend toward increased use of French or English in meetings and informal communication, but it is still necessary for official meetings and documents to be translated into the EU's 20 official languages. Besides simply translating texts, however, translators have the opportunity to take on other responsibilities after working in the Language Service for a certain period of time.¹⁸ These include the following:

Maintenance of the terminology database or "translation memory": People with strong IT skills are sometimes responsible for updating the electronic system used to find previously translated text segments so that the same work must not be redone.

Terminology: Occasionally, the translators at the EU must create official terms for new words or offices. For example, if the new German government creates a ministry with a new title, all the other official languages of the EU must have a consistent designation that accurately describes this new ministry. According to our interview partners, this task involves a great deal of communication and consultation with colleagues in other Language Services.

¹⁸ Such duties definitely exist in the GSC, where they were mentioned by our interviewees. However, the authors of this report cannot be certain that this section also applies to translators in the Commission, Parliament, or Committee of the Regions, as none of the interviewees in these institutions worked in the area of translation or interpreting.

Coordination: This refers to the delegation of work within one's service. Interestingly, it is not necessarily done by the Head of Unit or someone in a higher position than those receiving the assignments.

Revision: Translators with several years of experience check the texts translated by their colleagues and make the necessary changes to them to guarantee the documents' correctness.

This report shall concentrate on permanent positions; however, it is also important to mention that there are other types of work contracts available at the EU institutions. These are governed by the "Conditions of Employment of other servants of the European Communities". They include first and foremost **temporary staff**, which the Commission hires for periods of no more than six years and only "to palliate staffing shortages [...], for non-standard or temporary tasks, for Commissioners' private offices, [and] for specific requirements in the scientific sector."¹⁹ The second group is **contract staff**, who will replace auxiliary staff and are to hold temporary positions in offices and agencies and thus not perform core tasks of the EU. Contract staff can be in the AD or AST function group. **Seconded National Experts** receive their salaries from their home countries and serve to "strengthen links with national ministries, [...] improve knowledge of European policies [...] and] give the Commission rapid access to specialist knowledge." **Special advisers** are consultants given short-term assignments to deal with crisis situations in other parts of the world. Finally, internships (or *stages*, as they are called in French and often in English and German by people familiar with the EU) are available to about 200 college graduates per year: "There is no guarantee of future employment, but the '*stages*' provide excellent experience for those interested in future careers at a European level, either with the Community or otherwise" [italics added by author].²⁰

2.3 Recruitment Procedures

2.3.1 The European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO)

Until the recent administrative reforms, each of the EU institutions was responsible for recruiting its own personnel. Since 2003, however, the European Personnel Selection Office has taken over this task and begun organizing and carrying out competitions for all the institutions. According to the press release about the opening of EPSO, it "pools the resources of the dif-

¹⁹ URL: http://europa.eu.int/comm/reform/2002/chapter04_en.htm.

²⁰ Leonard, D. (2005). Guide to the European Union: The definitive guide to all aspects of the EU. London, Profile Books Ltd., p. 91.

ferent European institutions in order to ensure improved planning and organisation of the recruitment of EU officials” and should “provide a single point of contact” for EU citizens interested in working for one of the institutions.²¹ The EPSO’s Management Board, on which all EU institutions are represented, decides when which competitions – or *concours* as they are called in French and often in English and German by people familiar with the EU – will take place and in which languages or for which nationalities they will be offered.

Currently, one of the main priorities of the EU’s personnel policy is to recruit citizens from the new Member States. This has already taken place to a great extent: as of April 2005, 1081 of the targeted 1529 citizens from the EU-10 had been recruited.²² The competitions for these candidates are, however, somewhat different from those offered in the past. Previously, the competitions were offered in each of the official EU languages. Now, due to the extreme workload that would be required to translate the competitions into all the languages of the new member states, their competitions are available in German, French, and English. Those who develop the questions for these competitions take into consideration that the target group does not have the same level of text comprehension as a native speaker would. Fears that citizens from the old Member States can no longer obtain employment in the EU institutions since the eastern round of enlargement are false: according to our findings, there is still a need for people from the EU-15 and no limit has been placed on hiring them.

2.3.2 *Personnel selection competitions*

As mentioned above, open competitions are the official means of recruitment of the EU institutions. They are organized according to the EU’s staffing needs for generalists, specialists, and citizens from some or all EU member states²³. The steps candidates must take to pass a competition are as follows:

- 1) When a competition has been announced or “published”, people interested in taking it must register by filling out the necessary forms. Only if everything is filled out correctly are they allowed to participate.
- 2) The first official stage is an extensive multiple-choice test on the history and politics of the EU. Candidates can only proceed to the next step if they pass this test.
- 3) A written test follows, usually on one particular aspect or policy area of the EU. For example, people taking an agriculture competition will be tested on their knowledge of the common agricultural policy. The test is most often in the form of essay questions or case studies.

²¹ Source: http://europa.eu.int/epso/pdf/press-release_en.pdf.

²² Kubosova, L. (2005). “New member states struggle to fill top EU jobs.” Retrieved April 28, 2005, from <http://euobserver.com/?aid=18949&print=1>.

²³ One example of competitions open only to citizens from some member states was the recent round available only to citizens of the EU-10 in order to recruit citizens of the countries that joined the EU in the last enlargement (for more information, see i.a. Kubosova 2005).

- 4) An interview or oral exam is the final step candidates must pass before being placed on a reserve list. This test can be administered in a foreign language to test the candidate's skills but also serves to give the selection committee an overall impression of the candidate's personality and ability to communicate.

Very few participants pass the competitions and become so-called "successful candidates". The success rate varies depending on the number of people to be placed on the reserve list and the number of applicants. It is important to note that being on a reserve list does not give candidates any sort of guarantee that they will be hired by an EU institution. Instead, they then have the right to search for a position with one of the institutions. The average amount of time it takes to pass a competition is one and a half years, and it often takes an additional year or two to find a job. Apparently, DGs with open positions typically do not invite all candidates on the respective reserve list but rather only those who contacted them previously. Also, it is important to understand that the lists are divided up into so-called "merit groups": Each section of the competition has a different number of maximum points one can earn, and those who pass are sorted into these groups according to their scores. Interestingly, we were told that the GSC only recruits candidates from the first group, whereas the Commission has a policy of hiring anyone on the list. Finally, since the creation of EPSO and interinstitutional competitions, the EU organs are able to "flag" candidates they wish have priority in hiring. After having been flagged by one institution, it is possible but unlikely to be recruited by another institution.

All Heads of Unit have access to the reserve lists. One sees which competition each candidate passed, the date of the competition, which merit group the candidate is in, whether the candidate has been flagged by one of the institutions, and a profile of each candidate. This profile is not created by EPSO; rather, it is the responsibility of each candidate to create a detailed profile of him- or herself and to update it on a regular basis. Not doing so can worsen one's chances of being invited to an interview, as the Heads of Unit do not want to have to contact people to obtain missing information. This profile includes the following categories: education, professional experience, language skills, management and organization skills, IT skills, memberships, and additional qualifications.

Formally, the recruitment procedure can be described as follows:

- The unit or service in need of one or more staff members creates a profile of whom they need in terms of educational background, professional skills, language skills, and professional experience.
- Either the head of unit searches for qualified candidates on the reserve lists or requests EPSO to suggest candidates for the position.

- Three to five candidates are invited to an interview with employees from the personnel department and the service or unit with the open position (the Selection Board consists of at least three people and at least one from the administration).
- The interviews are not structured in any particular way and may differ greatly.
- The decision on which candidate to hire is made by the service or unit – whereby the Head of Unit has a great deal of influence – and approved by the Selection Board.
- In the case of directors and general directors, the institutions are not required to contact EPSO. Instead, they simply publish an advertisement in the Official Journal of the EU and anyone can apply (including those who have not passed a competition).

The criteria a hiring DG will focus on vary widely: Depending upon the job, they may consider language skills, teamwork, or activities besides professional skills and experience to be of central importance. Two factors that are always considered to be a plus are flexibility and the ability to become operative quickly; the latter is likely to be the case after having done a *traineeship* at an EU institution. With regard to professional experience, three years is considered to be the absolute minimum. Concerning one's educational background, a great majority of the current employees studied political science, law, business, or economics. There is certainly a need for specialists in certain fields as well, such as information technology, security, and accounting. A person's university education should not take too long, and a combination of theory and practical experience is essential. Additional qualifications are always beneficial, such as postgraduate studies and summer programs. Language skills must now include fluency in one EU language besides your mother tongue, and it is certainly helpful if one of these two is either English or French. Even a candidate's attitude toward the EU is important: he or she does not have to support every policy but should definitely support the idea of European integration in general. As mentioned above, however, the single most important factor in finding a job at the EU is the extent to which one takes initiative in searching. Candidates can further improve their chances of finding employment by regularly checking for job postings on the internet, contacting their country's Permanent Representation to the EU for assistance (more on this in the next section), and writing or calling human resources employees and Heads of Unit or Directors-General in the institutions. Finally, poor grades will not necessarily lower a candidate's chances of recruitment. Good grades may mean that people are good at writing or researching academic topics, according to one employee involved in the recruiting process, yet they do not accurately indicate how well a person can work.

2.4 Promotion

The EU's promotion procedures will be presented here briefly. For an entire overview of the rules and regulations, please refer to the EU's homepage and the Staff Regulations. The

process to go from AST to AD positions will not be described in this report as PROFIO's focus is solely on the careers of those already in the professional category.

Before the new Staff Regulations were introduced, there was a great deal of criticism of the principles on which people were promoted within the EU. A great deal of emphasis was placed on seniority rather than on merit and performance. This is one of the major changes made in the recent reform: it is now explicitly stated that people will be promoted on the basis of merit. Once a year, employees meet with their head of unit and discuss their past performance and future goals. The head of unit gives a certain number of merit points to each employee: 20 is the maximum and the average is 14 or 15. Employees continue to accrue points throughout their careers and are promoted when they reach the number specified by their institution or area. One exception is management positions: to become head of unit or director-general, one must apply when there is an opening. Also, we learned that the vast majority of career movement occurs through rotation and horizontal moves rather than promotion in the traditional sense. Finally, the Staff Regulations require employees to prove knowledge of a third official EU language before they can be promoted the first time. The level of proficiency to meet this requirement has not officially been established, but an interviewee said that one "must be able to conduct a conversation". The new promotion system has been described by some as "mathematical but transparent" in general.

2.5 Measures to promote national representation

Each member state has a Permanent Representation in Brussels to further its interests in the EU, and personnel policy is no exception. As this study is carried out in Germany, the research team chose to examine the activities of the German Federal Foreign Office and the Permanent Representation of the Federal Republic of Germany with regard to recruitment and promotion.

First of all, the German Federal Foreign Office has a Special Coordinator for German Personnel in International Organizations. This department cooperates with the Office for Executive Positions with International Organizations to assist Germans in finding positions at international organizations by providing information and individual advising to people interested in careers in this field. Furthermore, Germany's Permanent Representation to the EU (and those at most other international organizations, for that matter) has an officer for personnel matters. There are various ways in which the German government supports applications of German candidates. One method used by the Federal Foreign Office of Germany and various other EU member states is to offer preparatory seminars for those interested in taking the competition. The Germans who pass competitions can have their names placed on a mailing list to receive in-

ternal EU job postings from the Permanent Representation. The Federal Foreign Office has further set up an “international job pool” and an “international personnel pool” to supply both job seekers and employers with relevant information. Another type of assistance is to “lobby” for the German candidates once they are on the short list. Finally, get-togethers are organized a few times a year to enhance networking among the German EU employees who have chosen to be in the network (there are currently around 50 members) and the Germans whose names are on the reserve lists. However, it is important to note that the German Federal Foreign Office and the Permanent Representation do not gather information about successful German candidates or those who find positions with EU institutions;²⁴ instead, it is up to interested individuals to contact the appropriate person and offer or request assistance accordingly.

The German Permanent Representation also offers advice to German nationals who have passed a competition on how to find a job with an EU institution. Some of this advice will overlap with that provided by our interview partners, which emphasizes its relevance. One suggestion they make is to be very proactive: send unsolicited applications to various units in one’s field of interest, arrange informal meetings with people in Brussels to introduce oneself in a non-committal manner, and send résumés to the members of the German network. The “networkers” can then, if they are convinced of the candidate’s qualifications, recommend that he or she be hired. This is said to be a very effective method. Yet most important of all, many people stress, is to accept the first job offer from any DG or unit, even if it does not seem to be relevant to one’s field of interest. This is because it is possible to change positions after two years, and an internal horizontal rotation is much easier than attempting to find the perfect job from outside. Departments of auditing and environmental issues were mentioned as two less popular fields that may have job openings with less competition than foreign affairs, for example. People who can rely on their own network within the EU²⁵ also often have greater success than those without one. One final piece of advice from the Permanent Representation is that Germans traditionally had greater difficulty passing the competition because it is a selection procedure common in the French educational system but unfamiliar to Germans. However, Germans have very much caught up in terms of their success rate in the competitions as well as in finding employment later. The concerted efforts by the German government since the discovery of the comparatively low number of its nationals in international organizations is said to have assisted in this positive trend.

²⁴ Interestingly, we were told that the French and British governments have lists of all their nationals who work for the EU because they have the resources necessary to do so.

²⁵ Graduates of the Collège d’Europe were mentioned in particular.

3 Research design

To achieve the stated objectives of the PROFIO project, a multi-method-approach – a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods – was applied.

Exploring the complexity of individual educational and professional backgrounds as well as understanding perceptions and evaluations requires an undiluted focus on the individual. Qualitative interviews are a unique tool to examine the research subjects in depth and give them the possibility to “describe their experiences in their own terms” in interaction with the researcher.²⁶ Furthermore, qualitative methods were applied because interviews are seen as a particularly good means for the preparation of surveys: “The in-depth knowledge of social context acquired through qualitative research can be used to inform the design of survey questions for structured interviewing and self-completion questionnaires.”²⁷ Here, the qualitative method of interviewing was helpful for exploring and identifying terminology, concepts or subjects for investigation before relevant questions were constructed. Central themes that cut across the variety of answers obtained through the open interview questions were used to design the survey questions and categories of reply. In a final stage, a quantitative online survey was carried out to test if the results apply to a larger group of employees.

3.1 Semi-structured interviews

In this study, semi-structured interviews with different groups of employees within the EU institutions were conducted in order to compare educational and professional backgrounds as well as particular opinions and experiences. The target groups for the interviews were:

- employees of the EU Council Secretariat;
- employees of the European Commission, the European Parliament, and the Committee of the Regions; and
- successful candidates of the competition.

The interview participants differ in terms of nationality, sex, and age. The only common characteristic is that they work in one of the EU institutions. All interviewees are employed in the professional category and therefore have a university degree and several years of professional experience. Successful German candidates, some of whom have already been recruited by one of the EU institutions, were included in the sample because their particular

²⁶ Rubin, H. J. and I. S. Rubin (1995). Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data. Thousand Oaks, Sage Publishing, p. 17.

²⁷ Bryman, Alan (2004): Social Research Methods. Second Edition. Oxford: University Press, p. 457.

views and experiences on the selection and recruitment procedures of the EU bring complementary insight to the study and shed light on different aspects of the research questions of the PROFIO project.

A topic guide – an outline of the major themes and questions – was developed for the interviews. The interview questions or topics were derived from the research questions and stated objectives of the PROFIO study. The following topics were covered: the employees' expectations towards their career at the EU, their level of satisfaction with their work, their educational and professional backgrounds, and their experiences with the recruitment processes of the EU.²⁸

All interviews were completed either in English or German. The interviews were tape-recorded in order to be analyzed in detail at a later time. Each interview was transcribed in full length. When reviewing the data, the research team identified main themes or categories under which the qualitative data was labeled and sorted. The qualitative data was compared, related, and contrasted to identify patterns in the education or skills of successful employees in the EU institutions or map the diversity thereof. The quotes made by German interviewees and used in this study were translated into English.

3.2 Online survey

As previously mentioned, we chose to examine the EU Council Secretariat in greater detail than the other EU institutions because of its relevance to German recruiting patterns. Therefore, the qualitative data collected from the interviews with the employees of the GSC was used to design the large-scale online survey. For this purpose, the qualitative method of interviewing was helpful to cover a wide range of viewpoints and determine the ideal conception of the survey. The final version of the online survey contained 27 questions on the following topics:

- Employees' motivation to apply to the EU Council Secretariat
- Expectations employees had when beginning to work at the EU Council Secretariat
- Career development within the EU Council Secretariat
- Reasons and opportunities for promotion
- Career progression in terms of job responsibilities and content
- Working environment in general
- Educational background

²⁸ The topics varied slightly according to the target group. The successful candidates, for example, were not asked about their level of satisfaction with their work. For more information on topics covered during the interviews, please refer to Appendix 2.

- Evaluation of university education in terms of preparedness for the job
- Sociodemographics.

The questionnaire for GSC employees also included questions on their level of satisfaction with the work at the GSC in general, their work conditions, and their career perspectives.²⁹ Not all data collected from the online survey will be analyzed in this report. In accordance with the objectives of this study, the main focus was placed on the participants' educational background, their evaluation of university education, and the EU's recruitment processes.

The questionnaire was pre-tested among researchers and within the GSC and, after final adjustments were made, the GSC's E-mail Administration Team distributed the link to the questionnaire by e-mail to all GSC employees in the professional category. The survey was online for three weeks, and reminders were sent 10 days and again 17 days after the initial e-mail was sent.³⁰ All interview and survey participants were assured complete confidentiality of their responses in keeping with professional research standards.³¹ The quantitative data was analyzed by using SPSS and combined with the qualitative findings to give a fuller picture of the investigated phenomenon. The following table presents the steps taken for carrying out the online survey.

Step	Procedure
1	Qualitative interviews with various groups of GSC employees in the professional category were carried out and analyzed.
2	The online survey was designed and pre-tested.
3	E-mail with project description, explanation of procedures, and invitation to participate in survey was sent by the GSC's E-mail Administration Team to

²⁹ For carrying out the online survey, the EU Council Secretariat's human resources department asked the PROFIO team to include questions on work satisfaction in the survey. Obtaining information on work conditions at the GSC and how satisfied the employees are with their work is also of great interest for our research project, as we thereby gain a more realistic picture of the employees' everyday work experiences in the EU institutions. However, the main focus remains on educational backgrounds and the evaluation of university education and selection processes.

³⁰ The online survey was carried out using professional, field-tested software developed by the German company Rogator (<http://www.rogator.de>). During the period of time in which the survey was available online, hosting and data storage was provided by the software company. The company does not relay any information to third parties and guarantees data security on its server system that is up to date with the latest developments in the IT sector.

³¹ The PROFIO research team guaranteed data protection of standards under the terms of European and German law. Protection of the privacy of all participants was ensured through anonymous data collection, data aggregation, and analysis on an aggregated data level. No connection was made between the persons taking part in the survey and the answers they have given. No third party had access to the data set. It was further guaranteed that the collected data will be used only for the purpose of the research project (PROFIO).

	all A-level employees; each person received a link to the questionnaire and an individual password in order to take part.
4	10 days and 17 days after the invitation e-mail, a reminder was sent to the same group of people asking those who have not yet completed the questionnaire to do so as soon as possible.
5	End of the survey (20 days after the invitation e-mail was sent): the link to the questionnaire was removed and collected data was analyzed.
6	The EU Council Secretariat's human resources department will receive the preliminary version of findings to be published. Survey findings will be published on the website www.pro fio.de .

Table 3: Steps taken in carrying out the online survey

No sample was drawn from the population, but rather we tried to cover *all* members of the group of interest. The response rate was 39.4% and calculated in the following way:

Population³²	1376
E-mails undelivered	5
Out of office during entire duration of the survey	22
Non-contactable members of population	27
Adjusted numbers	1349
Completed questionnaires ³³	532
Did not participate	817
Response rate	39.4%

Table 4: Calculation of the response rate

Although this is a relatively high number of participants, with less than 50% of the questionnaires completed there might still be a systematic difference between those who participated and those who did not. To estimate the quality of data, some parameters of the respondents and the population were compared.

³² The population consists of all GSC employees in the professional category.

³³ Participants answering one question at least.

Gender: The distribution between male and female survey participants (53% male and 47% female) equaled that of the population (51% male and 49% female). This means that there is no gender bias in the data.

Post/Grades: As the following figures indicate, the distribution of grades in the collected data is close to the distribution of grades within the GSC, which means there is no bias in the reported results.

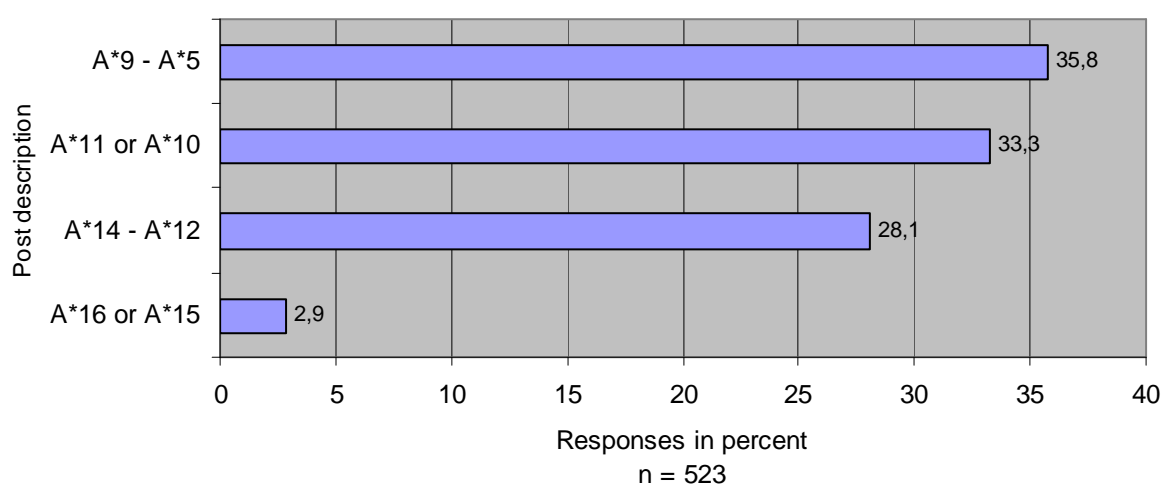


Figure 1: Distribution of grades among the survey participants

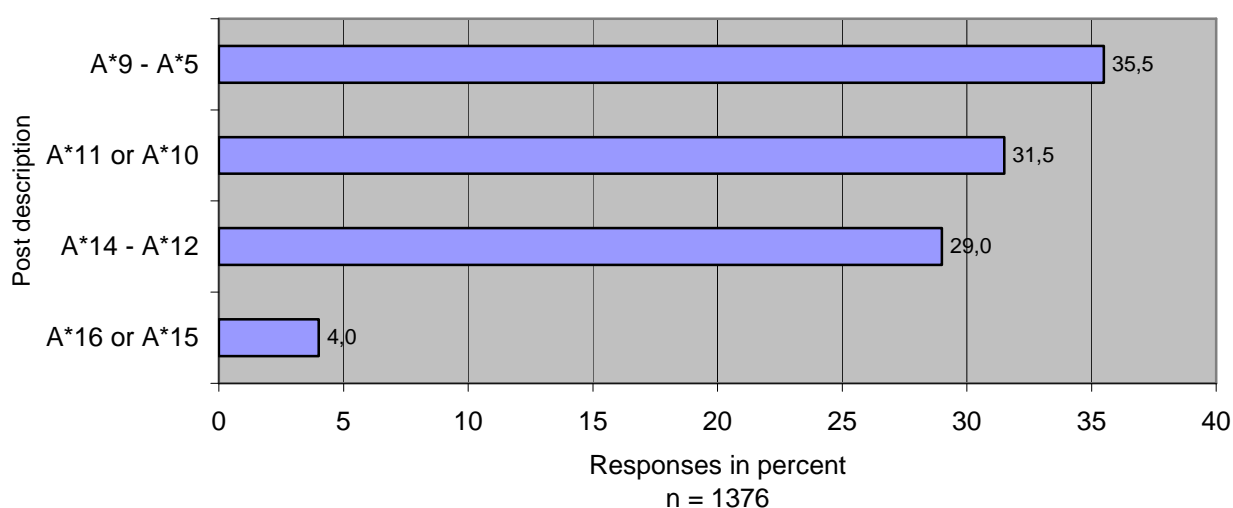


Figure 2: Distribution of grades within the GSC

4 Results

In this chapter, the main findings of the study within the EU institutions are presented. The results from the various groups of employees and the online survey are presented separately to identify how particular patterns in education, views, or experiences may or may not apply to different groups within the EU institutions.

4.1 Interviews with successful candidates

As previously mentioned, one target group of this study was people who recently passed one of the recruitment competitions of the EU. Their comments are useful in evaluating how to best prepare oneself for the competition, what type of knowledge and tasks one must master, and how to obtain employment in one of the EU institutions after having secured a place on the reserve list. These and other competition-related issues will be the topic of this section.

4.1.1 Preparation and educational background

According to our interview participants, extensive preparation is necessary for passing the competition. The successful candidates almost all mentioned having prepared for the competition by attending the preparatory courses provided by the German Federal Foreign Office. Most of them were quite content with the course, as they had the opportunity to practice interview and test situations and also build networks with the other course participants.

"I have experienced the support of the German Federal Foreign Office as very positive and I would also suggest making use of this assistance if one is interested."

"There was coaching with a consulting firm before the oral test, which was conducted by the German Federal Foreign Office. That was also very good. It has a similar character as an assessment center even though it is not assessed there, of course."

Half of those interviewed said that they reviewed the information booklet from the German Federal Foreign Office titled "250 Questions about Europe and European Politics"³⁴ and rated it as helpful for the preparation. One-fourth of the laureates mentioned studying in small groups, looking at the EU websites, or reading newspapers and journals in order to prepare for the competition.

"I think what is very important for the concours now and the subject areas is to prepare for it in a focused manner and also to look on the websites of the Commission and the

³⁴ German title: "250 Fragen über Europa und Europäische Politik".

Parliament or whoever is advertising the post what the current topics are and what is happening at the moment and also to read the daily newspaper to see what is currently going on in politics. The Economist and the Financial Times are highly recommended. Yes, furthermore, I think it is very important to follow the development of the EU in that specific area."

They were further asked whether their educational background was helpful for passing the competition. One laureate said that his or her study program maintains contact with people in Brussels, which was quite beneficial for learning about the EU and what jobs there are like. Another stated that law is a good field of study in that it teaches one to think and write in a structured manner and to understand the EU treaties; this is helpful for the written part of the competition and one's future job. Finally, it was also claimed that studying political science teaches students to understand "the big picture" better than other fields.

Skills said to be necessary for passing the competition include being able to understand texts quickly, logical thinking and analytical skills, the ability to estimate the solutions to math problems, and attaining a clear structure of your arguments in texts. Concerning languages skills, one interviewee said that it is much more important – at least for taking the competition – to speak one foreign language very well than several languages moderately well.

4.1.2 Prior experience

In our study, the interviewees were also asked to talk about their work experience and how helpful this experience was for preparing for and passing the competition. Half of those interviewed mentioned having done one or more internships. One person said it helped in preparing him or her for the competition, and another said it provided insight into the EU institutions and the way they function.

"It is definitely an advantage when someone is already on location. This is an invaluable advantage, I think, because you may already have contacts that you can ask since you know the structures you're dealing with. You definitely know more. That is different from learning theoretically how Commission, Council, and Parliament work together when you have already experienced it firsthand for a few years."

All but one interviewee mentioned having gained professional experience besides internships prior to the competition. One person said that this work experience helped in making connections with people in the EU institutions. Another person encouraged people to work for a company before going to the EU to gain experience in an area besides public service.

4.1.3 Evaluation of the competition and the reserve list procedures

The successful candidates were asked to describe their experience with the competition and to give their opinions and recommendations to assist people planning to take it in the future. Some of the positive comments included that the interview was very relaxed in that the interviewers were more interested in learning about the candidate's social skills than about their knowledge in his or her area of expertise. Another interviewee said that the competition is "doable if you are willing to put some effort into it".

However, the majority of those interviewed had a rather negative opinion of the competition. One said that most of the material tested is not at all relevant to working in the EU. Another suggested that the use of an assessment center would be better at determining who would be able to do the job, as basic skills and competences are tested and not only knowledge.

The period after the competition, when the candidates are on a reserve list, was criticized even more. The people interviewed described this procedure as "absurd", "dilettantish", "opaque", "inefficient", and "an incredible waste of time for both sides" [the applicants and the employer]. This seems to be due to the common practice of contacting people in DGs of interest or in human resources departments to inquire about job openings. The applicants complain that the people in the EU institutions do not read their applications thoroughly.³⁵ Another major problem according to them is the practice of "flagging" candidates mentioned earlier. Many of the candidates "flagged" by one institution felt they had difficulties receiving job offers from other institutions interested in them and thus had lower overall chances of being hired.

The successful candidates interviewed also discussed the efforts they made toward finding a position in an EU institution while on the reserve list. Half of the interviewees sent unsolicited applications to various political DGs and/or personnel departments. Others mentioned speaking to friends and acquaintances in the institutions to find out about job openings, contacting people whom they did not know before in their areas of interest, and sending applications for the job openings sent around by the permanent representation (even if they are not sure their profile matches that of the desired candidate). Two people felt as though luck played a major role in being hired by one of the institutions.

³⁵ Specifically, they said that their applications were rejected on the grounds that they had not passed a competition (even though they had) or that their qualifications did not match those required for the position.

4.1.4 Recommendations to future applicants and universities

Finally, the successful candidates were asked what they would recommend to future applicants for the competition. Their answers included the following: doing internships, working on one's language skills, gaining experience abroad, participating in a preparatory course offered by the German Federal Foreign Office, gaining professional experience in a context related to the EU, and being present and proactive in Brussels.

When asked how universities could best prepare students for passing the competition, one interview participant mentioned that universities should build up networks and cooperations with EU institutions to organize study trips to EU institutions, meetings, and conferences. Furthermore, universities should provide their students with career services – information on internships, selection procedures and entry-level opportunities.

"An early network, early connections that are actually based on the professors' initiative, that are not necessarily part of the curriculum as such; those were very helpful to actually awaken the interest to come here."

"What universities could do is create [internship] pools or give the information that you can become an intern in the Commission."

4.2 Interviews with employees in the European Commission and the Committee of the Regions

Another target group of this study was people being involved in the informal network of German employees at the EU institutions. The networkers interviewed work in departments of either the European Commission or the Committee of the Regions. Focus was placed on their educational background and evaluation of how well university prepared them for the competition and their current field of work. Their comments and recommendations on how to best prepare oneself for the competition and work at the EU institutions are also of great interest in this study.

4.2.1 Educational background

All the networkers who were interviewed earned an academic degree of some sort. The subjects studied most frequently were law, economics, political science, history, languages, philosophy, and agriculture. Some interviewees earned additional qualifications aside from their university education; these were mainly certificates or courses they took during or after their studies. Most of them have studied abroad and speak at least two foreign languages. Overall, the networkers were quite content with what they learned at university. Most interviewees, particularly those who studied law, said that their university education provided

them with the skills and qualifications needed for their work at the European Commission. One interviewee stated that studying law was beneficial, as one acquires analytical and problem-solving skills:

“Law school and a law background in general have served me very well, and I also had nine years of Latin, which counts as well, because it all helps one develop a certain way of going about doing things and dealing with problems – no matter what kind of problem – and it allows you to arrange and structure all the relevant information and then to realize it in a short and sweet manner but also as concisely as possible.”

Another networker who also studied law mentioned that this university education prepared him or her for the competition in that he or she acquired analytical, reading, and problem-solving skills as well as a basic knowledge of European law. In this context, two networkers underlined that law students are generally better prepared for passing the competition than other students, as they have learned how to read and work through legal documents. Here, when comparing the comments of the networkers with the successful candidates on how well the university education prepared for passing the open competition, it seems that law is a helpful field of study as it teaches one to think and write in a structured manner and to understand the EU treaties.

Besides equipping one with essential skills and qualifications, one interviewee stressed that university provided her or him with useful contacts in the EU institutions through research projects carried out in cooperation with the EU Commission and mandatory excursions to EU institutions.

When asked what was lacking from their university education, most interviewees referred to practical experience and experience abroad. Furthermore, one interviewee mentioned that universities should focus more on language, communication, and soft skills. Moreover, many networkers stressed that students should be informed about entry-level opportunities (traineeships, internships, and scholarship programs), career opportunities, recruitment processes, selection procedures, and working conditions at international organizations. Universities should provide services which assist students in their career development.

“What is also important is that educational institutions really inform people about the work opportunities in international organizations.”

To summarize the comments made by the networkers about their university education, it can be stated that analytical and problem solving skills were rated quite highly as being taught well in university, while the practical experience, professional expertise, certain skills needed for being hired, and basic knowledge of career opportunities and working conditions in the EU

was said to have not been provided by one's university education, which indicates that these are areas in which there is still room for improvement.

4.2.2 Professional experience before working with the EU

One very important qualification for working in EU institutions is likely to be the practical and professional experience that was gained in employment prior to one's current job. All interviewed networkers had previously gained professional experience. The areas in which they had their professional experience were primarily the public sector and academia. Those who worked for international organizations (UN and EU) prior to their current job view their experience either as being very important for the preparation of the competition or their current field of work. They stressed that they gained relevant professional experience in addition to knowledge of international organizations and their working culture.

4.2.3 Necessary skills and qualifications for working at the EU institutions

Another important issue in the context of the PROFIO project is the interviewees' opinions on what skills and qualifications are necessary for their current work in EU Institutions. Based on the fact that all networkers had several years of professional work experience at the EU institutions or other international organizations, it can be assumed that the question about essential skills and qualifications is answered in terms of these experiences. Therefore, the following comments should be seen as a subjective evaluation in light of their professional experience.

With regard to skills, all interviewed networkers mentioned that analytical, communication, social, intercultural, language, management, and leadership skills are very important for their current field of work. These opinions are supported by the following two statements:

"Yes, I would state three things. First of all language skills. Language skills are a very deciding factor, very necessary for my current field of work. The second thing is flexibility in work and adaptability so that you are prepared to follow the methods, the topics, the political priorities, and also to do things totally different than usual. And the third thing is the ability to communicate, which is extremely important."

"Openness is very important. Curiosity is very important. The ability to make a compromise. You should not appear arrogant. That is something especially Germans usually have some trouble with. You should be able to communicate. That is very important, I think – here more than in a national context."

Furthermore, most of them mentioned that above all else detailed knowledge of the EU institutions and processes is helpful to perform the various tasks, particularly to understand

how the EU institutions work. As mentioned above, professional experience or other practical experience as well as experience abroad were rated as being very important.

"I think without my experience abroad, they would not have taken me."

"Even if it is only internships during the studies and so on, [at least] you have shown at some point that you do not get culture shock right away when living somewhere else for three months."

4.2.4 Recommendations to future applicants and successful candidates

In the interviews, the networkers were also asked to give specific recommendations to graduates planning to work in one of the EU institutions and people who have already passed the competition successfully and are now applying for positions.

Most of the networkers interviewed mentioned that young people should gain experience abroad and practical experience within international organizations before they apply for positions in EU Institutions. One interviewee, who is also involved in selecting personnel, stressed the importance of detailed knowledge of EU institutions and processes besides the specific skills (communication, social, management, leadership, and language skills) essential for a career at the EU. In this context, another networker mentioned that a "good combination of theory and practical experience" is important. Furthermore, he or she mentioned that many generalists are needed at the EU institutions to guarantee future interinstitutional mobility.

Concerning the preparation for the recruitment competition, all networkers mentioned that intensive preparation is necessary to pass the competition. In this context, they recommended that applicants attend the preparatory courses provided by the German Federal Foreign Office, as they cover the most relevant topics and go through procedures of the recruitment competitions. As previously mentioned, the successful German candidates interviewed emphasized that these courses helped them pass the competition.

Giving recommendations to successful candidates, most of the interviewees mentioned that once they are on the list, they should take initiative, start networking, and use personal contacts to "lobby" effectively for a post in their preferred area, as being on a reserve list does not give applicants any sort of guarantee of being hired by an EU institution. Furthermore, it is said to be useful to know people who can influence recruitment decisions and also to have contact people in different departments who can provide information about open positions. According to one networker, Germans in particular have yet to learn the art of networking:

"Concerning lobbying, Germans are not really the best in the world. Germans still think very naively, 'If I am good, I will be supported somehow, I will get an interesting job somehow.' It is not like that. Other cultures do it differently."

As part of lobbying processes, successful candidates should show initiative in Brussels. For example, they should be active in terms of sending applications and arranging informal interviews with heads of departments and units:

"[It is a good idea] to take some time, two, three days and then to invest the money to come to Brussels and to introduce yourself specifically to the Heads of Unit."

Another networker mentioned that successful candidates should search for a wide variety of positions and not limit their efforts to jobs that sound the most interesting; they should apply for different kinds of positions, as well those for which they do not feel qualified:

"Germans tend to apply to posts too restrictedly that, let's say, are in direct linear connection to their education or work experience. And that is certainly not the right method. You should be interested in a much wider variety of possible posts."

To summarize the recommendations made by the interview participants, candidates on the EPSO's reserve lists can improve their chances of employment by:

- checking for job postings on the internet;
- contacting their Permanent Representation for assistance;
- writing or calling human resources employees and Heads of Unit in the EU institutions;
- using the European standard CV;
- being flexible, proactive, and creative.

4.3 Interviews and online survey at the EU Council Secretariat

The PROFIO research team conducted an online survey and qualitative interviews with employees of the EU Council Secretariat. Below the main findings of qualitative and quantitative data collected are presented, compared, and contrasted with each other.

4.3.1 Sociodemographics

As previously mentioned, 47% of the survey participants were female while 53% were male.

The age distribution was as follows:

> 25 years	0.6%
26 – 35 years	21.9%
36 – 45 years	34%
46 – 55 years	27.3%
56 – 65 years	16.1%
n = 483	100%

Table 5: Age distribution

Altogether, 24 different nationalities were mentioned. The nationalities stated most are the following: German (8.18%), Finnish (8.18%), British (7.55%), Belgian (7.55%), Italian (7.13%), and Swedish (5.87%). The small case numbers do not allow for further detailed statistical analysis based on nationality.

4.3.2 Educational background

Most of the survey participants have an academic background. Only 7.3% have not earned a university degree. The majority or 68.8% have a Master (or comparable) degree, while 12.5% have a Bachelor and 11.5% a Ph.D. as their highest degrees. As the focus was placed on employees in the professional category, this result is not surprising: One core requirement for positions in the professional category is a university degree. However, when considering the types of degrees earned, one must take into account the diversity of degrees that still exist across the European Union and the challenges this creates in comparing them. In our survey, we relied on the survey participants' knowledge of classification of degrees in higher education. Moreover, it is important to mention that there are many different educational paths that one person can follow, which might not be apparent when looking at quantitative data. For example, some employees continue their formal education after graduating from university by pursuing other postgraduate degrees or being involved in "life-long learning" activities. When analyzing the qualitative data collected, the responses show a more detailed picture. One participant in our study of the GSC stated:

"I have a Master degree in political science and I have signed up for a postgraduate course in journalism. I am going to start in August and finish in two and a half years."

Therefore, the data presented here reduces the complexity of different paths one can follow, and this should be taken into account when drawing conclusions from it.

To find out in which area the survey participants obtained their academic degrees, they were asked about their major and minor subjects. With regard to the distribution of the major subjects, the following results were found:³⁶

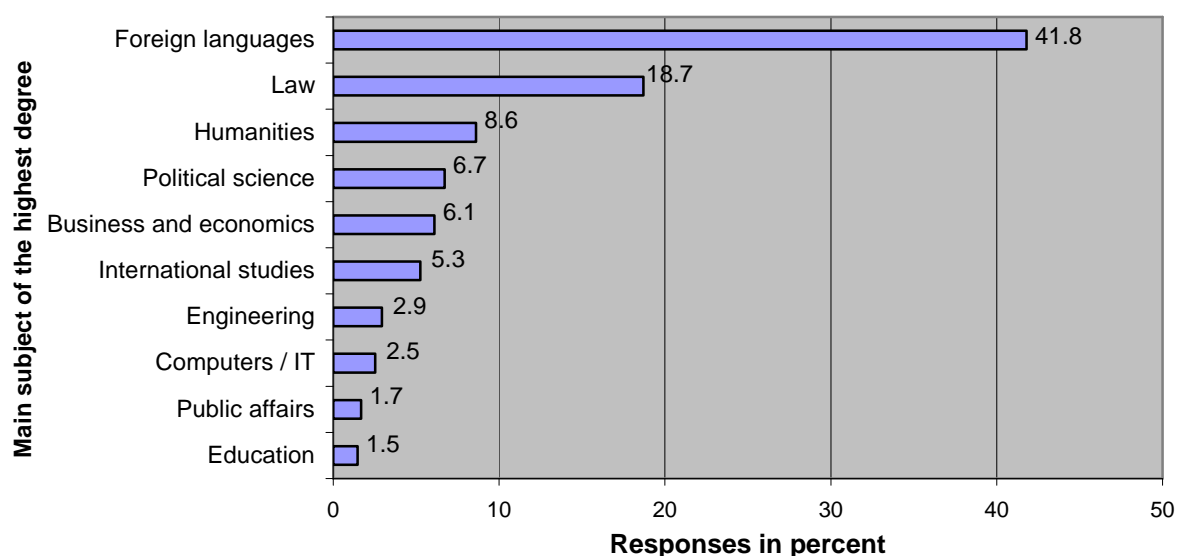


Figure 3: Main subject of the highest degree

The subjects the survey participants most frequently studied in their highest degree were foreign languages, law, humanities, business and economics, and international studies. The relatively high number of people who studied foreign languages can most likely be explained by the fact that over half of the survey participants (52.37%) are employed in the Language Services and a requirement for getting hired is to have a very sound knowledge of at least two languages of the European Union and relevant professional experience as a interpreter and translator. When comparing the educational backgrounds of the Language Service employees and all other GSC employees, our study has shown that most of the people (72.8%) employed in the Language Services earned a degree in the area of foreign languages:

³⁶ The survey participants were asked to choose one subject out of the following list: 1) Agricultural and food sciences, 2) Area, cultural, ethnic, or gender studies, 3) Business and economics (accounting, finance, marketing, management studies, etc.), 4) Communication studies (journalism, public relations), 5) Computer science and information technology, 6) Education, 7) Engineering (civil engineering, mechanical engineering), 8) Humanities (history, literature, philosophy, religion), 9) International studies (international affairs, international relations), 10) Law, 11) Mathematics and statistics, 12) Medicine, 13) Modern and classical languages, 14) Natural sciences (biology, chemistry, geology, physics), 15) Political science, 16) Public affairs (public policy, public administration, public management), 17) Social and behavioral sciences (psychology, sociology, social work) 18) Visual or performing arts (art history, dance, theater), 19) Other.

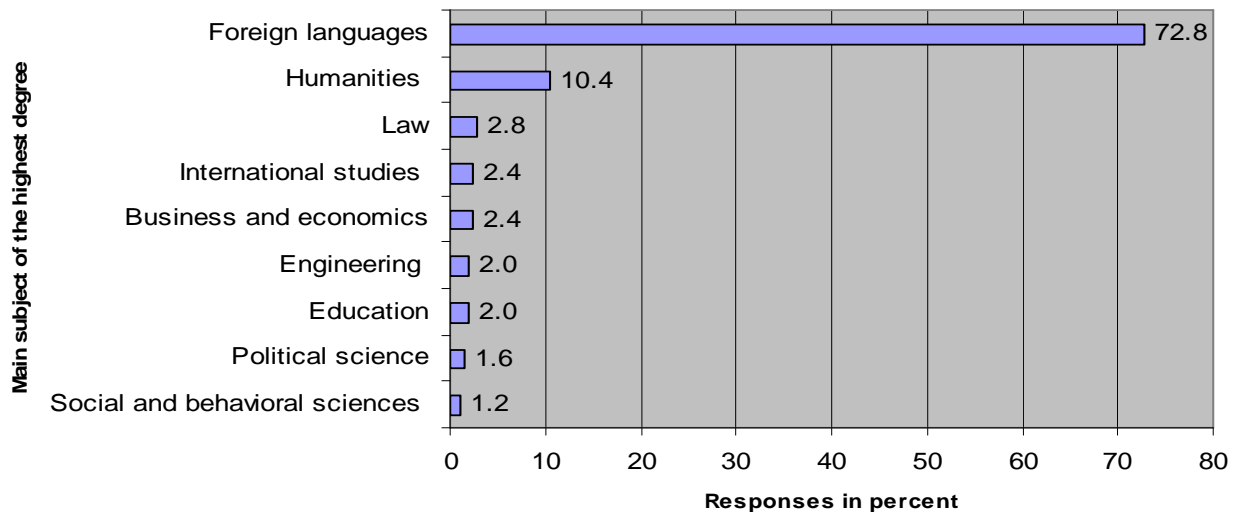


Figure 4: Main subject of the highest degree – Language Service employees

Excluding the responses from the Language Service employees, the distribution of the major subjects among the other survey participants shows a different picture: The non-linguistic staff most often studied law (36.28%), political science (12.39%), business and economics (10.18%), international studies (8.41%), and foreign languages (7.52%).

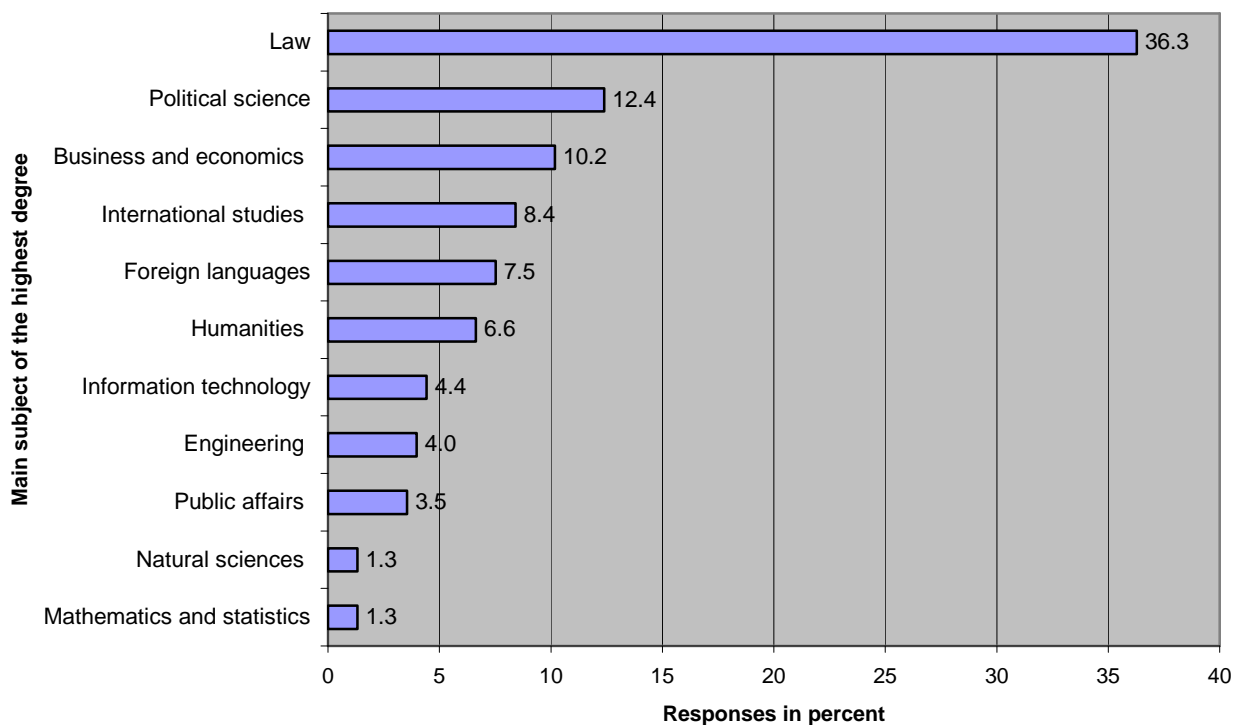


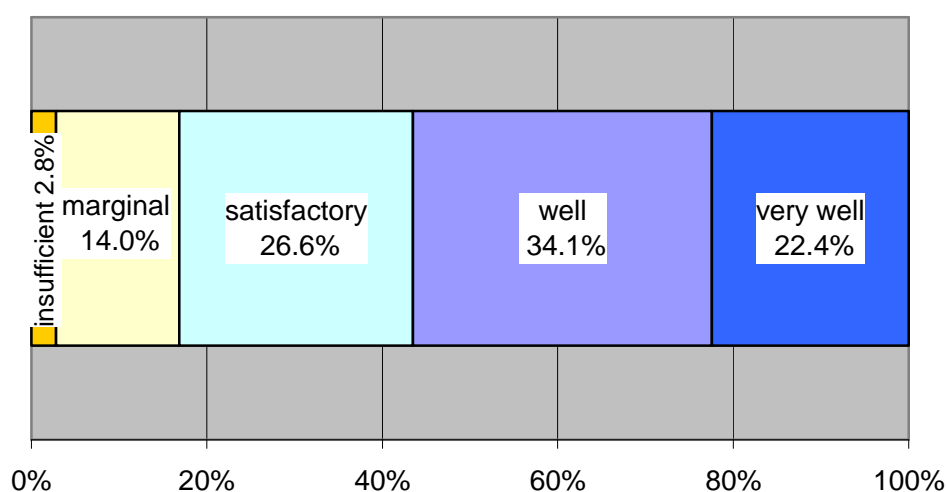
Figure 5: Main subject of the highest degree – Non-Language Service employees

From this chart, it is clear that a combination of law, political science, business, economics, and foreign languages seems to be a good means of preparing oneself for a career at the GSC.

4.3.3 Evaluation of university education

One very important issue in the context of the PROFIO research project is the employees' evaluation of their university education in preparing them for their current field of work. When analyzing the data collected, one must keep in mind that many survey participants already had several years of professional experience and that their answers to the retrospective question about their university education and level of job preparedness can thus only be answered in view of these experiences.³⁷ This is, however, precisely what the PROFIO survey hoped to obtain: a subjective evaluation in light of professional experience rather than an 'objective' picture of what universities do.³⁸

Overall, half of the survey participants were quite content with what they learned at university, as 56.5% rated it as having prepared them "well" or "very well".



Responses in percent

5-point scale (1 "insufficient" - 5 "very well"), Mean: 3.59, n = 499

Figure 6: Evaluation of education I: When you look back at your university education, how would you rate how it prepared you for your current field of work?

³⁷ Butz, B., S. Haunss, et al. (1997). *Flexible Allrounder: Wege in den Beruf für PolitologInnen: Ergebnisse einer AbsolventInnenbefragung am Institut für Politische Wissenschaft der Universität Hamburg*. Hamburg, LIT Verlag, p. 10.

³⁸ This will be evaluated more closely in the second part of the PROFIO study, when currently offered study programs that prepare people for careers in international organizations will be examined.

Statements made by the interview participants support the results of the online survey:

"My LL.M. in European Studies was relevant to my current work."

"My Master in Foreign Languages [was helpful] because in this environment you're absolutely obliged to work in at least one other foreign language."

"My background [the interview participant studied translation] is very efficient. I know that I use my education. I can see things that are not strange or foreign to me through my education."

"My university degree [the interview participant studied European Studies] prepared me for European politics, and that's what I need to do anything inside the European Union. The European Union needs people who understand European integration."

To create a more detailed picture, the online survey contained a matrix question in which the survey participants were asked to rate how important their university education was for developing certain skills and competences³⁹. The means were as follows:

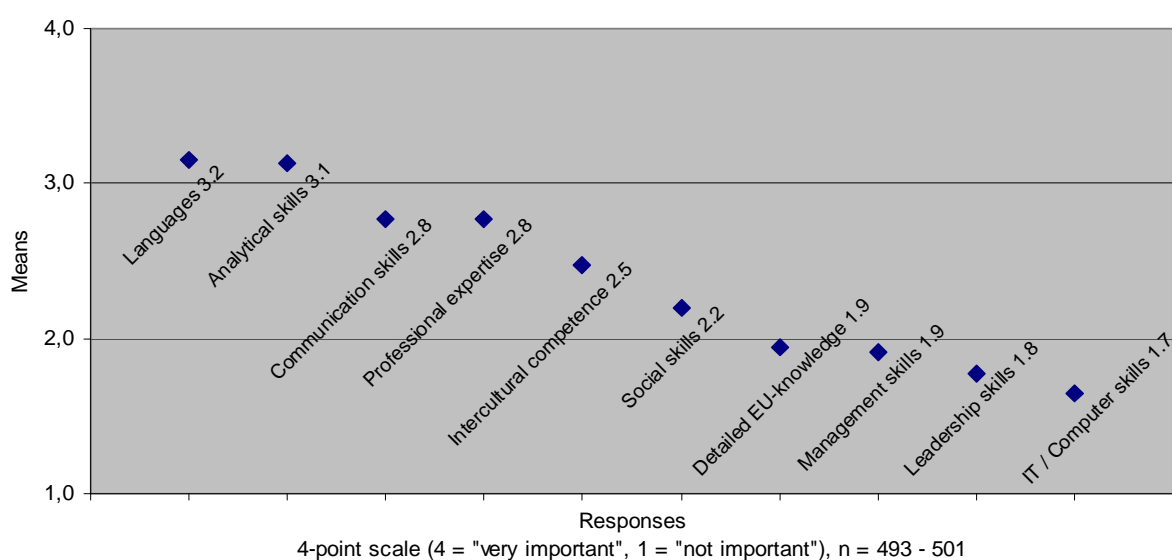


Figure 7: Evaluation of education II: Please rate how important your university education was for developing the following skills.

While language and analytical skills were rated quite highly as being taught well in university, communication and social skills, professional expertise, and intercultural competence are rated lower but are still in the upper area between "less important" and

³⁹ The skills and qualifications were defined as follows: Language skills, Communication skills (presentation skills, rhetoric, writing skills); Leadership skills (Assertiveness, Task delegation, ability to motivate others); Analytical skills (ability to identify and solve a problem, critical thinking); Management skills (administrative abilities; organization skills, time management); Social skills (intercultural competence, ability to deal with conflicts, interpersonal skills); Professional expertise (Background knowledge for your current occupation); Detailed EU knowledge (knowledge on EU institutions and processes).

“important”. With a mean of nearly two and less, detailed knowledge on EU institutions and processes, management skills, leadership skills, and IT/computer skills needed for working at the GSC was said to have been provided by one’s university education, yet this certainly leaves room for improvement.

When comparing the different Directorates-General at the GSC, significant differences were found between the evaluations on how well one’s university education developed certain skills and competences. While all GSC employees other than those in the Language Services rated IT/computer skills, analytical skills, leadership skills, management skills, and detailed EU knowledge as being taught well in university, the employees of the Language Services evaluated their university education better in equipping them with language and communication skills, professional expertise, and intercultural competence.⁴⁰ Here, the most significant difference was found in the evaluation on how well university developed language skills and provided detailed EU knowledge. Compared to the Language Service employees, the employees in all other Directorates evaluated their education better in providing them with detailed knowledge on EU institutions and processes.⁴¹ While the employees of the Language Service rated languages skills quite highly as being taught well at university, all other GSC employees evaluated their university education as less important or not important in developing languages skills.⁴² The following statements given by survey participants in the space available for comments support these results:

“Translation for GSC is a specific field of translation. But the language and translation skills in general that I acquired in university were a strong basis.”

“I have a University degree in translation with law as a minor subject. However, the EU legal knowledge I acquired at University is insufficient to translate and revise the highly specialized texts we have to deal with here.”

“The languages are very important, but I learnt them in the country rather than at university. What university taught me was mainly analytical thought and how to structure a text properly.”

⁴⁰ T-test: Group means:

IT/computer skills: Employees of the Language Service 1.55 to employees of other department groups 1.77, sig. 0.006. Analytical skills: Employees of the Language Service 2.91 to employees of other department groups 3.37, sig. 0.000. Leadership skills: Employees of the Language Service 1.56 to employees of other department groups 2.02, sig. 0.000. Management skills: Employees of the Language Service 1.75 to employees of other department groups 2.09, sig. 0.000. Communication skills: Employees of the Language Service 2.81 to employees of other department groups 2.73, sig. 0.365. Detailed EU knowledge: Employees of the Language Service 1.69 to employees of other department groups 2.23, sig. 0.000. Language skills: Employees of the Language Service 3.62 to employees of other department groups 2.62, sig. 0.000. Professional expertise: Employees of the Language Service 3.62 to employees of other department groups 2.62, sig. 0.000. Intercultural competence: Employees of the Language Service 2.55 to employees of other department groups 2.38, sig. 0.060.

⁴¹ T-test: Group means: Employees of the Language Service 1.69 to employees of other department groups 2.23, sig. 0.000.

⁴² T-test: Group means: Employees of the Language Service 3.62 to employees of other department groups 2.62, sig. 0.000.

Here, when drawing conclusion from the demonstrated results, one must keep in mind the educational backgrounds of the GSC employees: Most of the employees (72,8%) who work in the Language Service department have studied foreign languages in their major subject and, as our study has shown, they rated their university education highly in providing them with language skills, while detailed EU knowledge could have been taught better. In contrast, employees of all other DGs, who have their majors mainly in law, political science, business and economics, evaluated their university education as “less important” in developing language skills but as “important” in providing detailed knowledge on EU institutions and processes. Overall, when paying particular attention to the responses of all other GSC employees than Language Service employees, it can be stated that universities could better equip their students with management, leadership, language, and IT/computer skills.

To find out whether these skills are important for their work at the GSC, the survey included an open question about which skills and qualifications were lacking from the participants’ university education that they need in their current field of work. Here, most answers referred to the skills and competences mentioned above: IT/computer skills (19.6% of all answers), followed by management skills (13.4% of all answers), language skills (13.2% of all answers), and detailed knowledge on EU institutions and processes (10.1% of all answers).

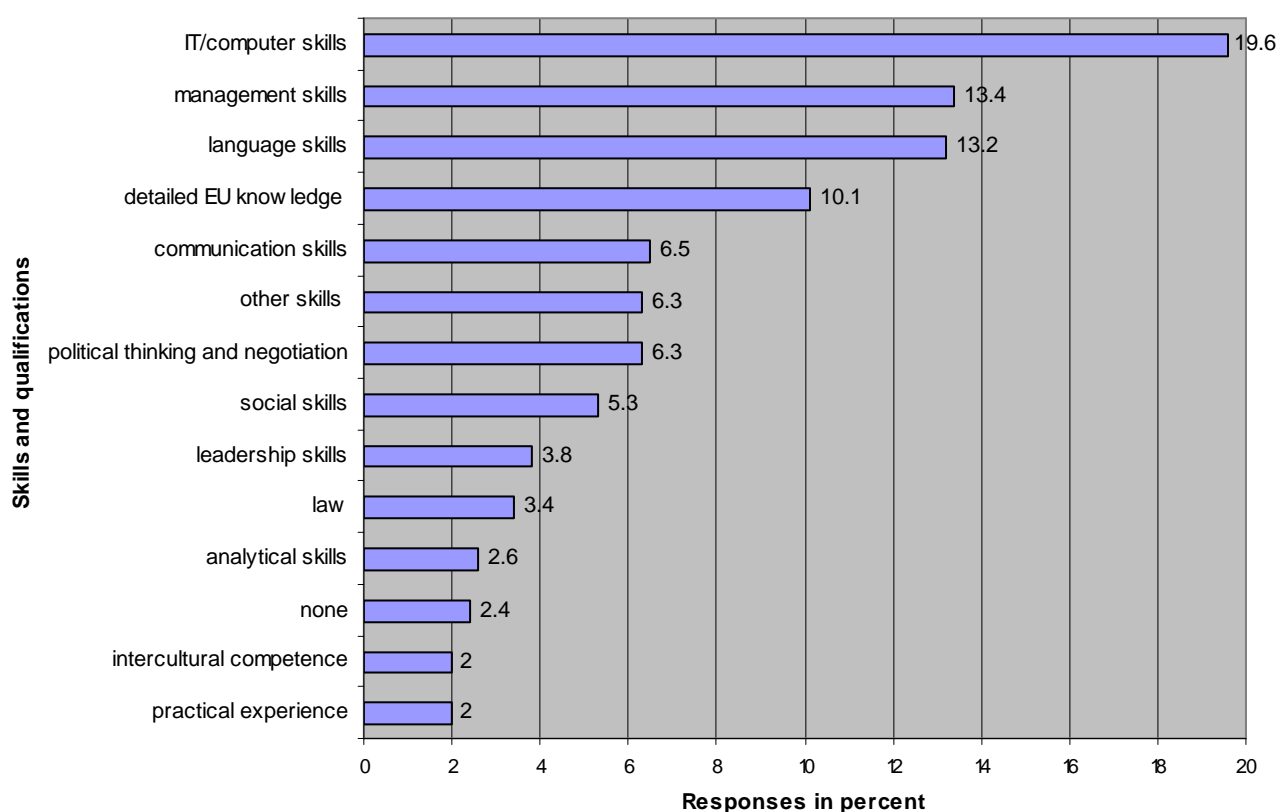


Figure 8: Skills or qualifications – if any – that are necessary for your current field of work and that were lacking from your university education

When comparing the responses of all other GSC employees with the responses of the Language Service employees, the following significant differences were found: All other GSC employees stated that universities could do better in developing the following skills needed for their current field of work. Management skills (17.7% of all answers) were mentioned most often, followed by language skills (15.4%), IT/computer skills (10.8%), and communication skills (10.8%). In contrast, the Language Service employees most often indicated that IT/computer skills (29%), detailed knowledge of EU institutions and processes (14.3%), language skills (11%), and management skills (9%) were lacking from their university education.

When relating these findings to the employees' assessment on how important a university education is for developing certain skills, it can be concluded that universities could greatly improve in equipping their students with the following skills and knowledge necessary for working at the GSC: management skills, IT/computer skills, detailed knowledge of the EU institutions and processes, language skills, and communication skills.

4.3.4 Necessary skills and qualifications for working at the GSC

The online survey contained a matrix question in which the survey participants were asked to rate which skills and qualifications⁴³ are necessary for working at the GSC. The means were as follows:

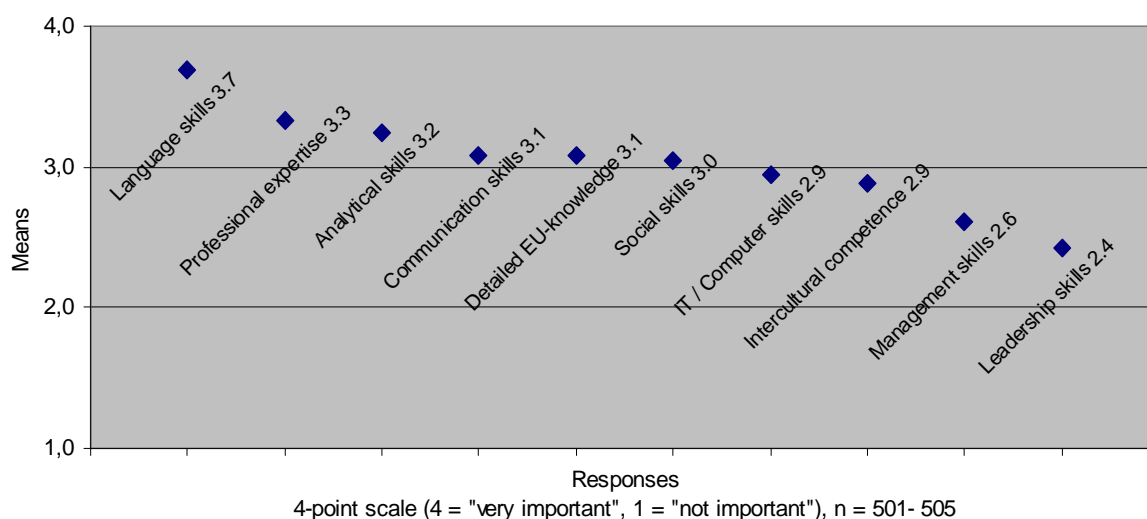


Figure 9: Necessary skills and qualifications for working at the GSC

⁴³ The skills and qualifications were defined as follows: Language skills, Communication skills (presentation skills, rhetoric, writing skills); Leadership skills (Assertiveness, Task delegation, ability to motivate others); Analytical skills (ability to identify and solve a problem, critical thinking); Management skills (administrative abilities; organization skills, time management); Social skills (intercultural competence, ability to deal with conflicts, interpersonal skills); Professional expertise (Background knowledge for your current occupation); Detailed EU knowledge (knowledge on EU institutions and processes).

While language skills are rated as “very important” for working at the GSC, professional expertise, analytical skills, communication and social skills, as well as detailed EU knowledge and IT/computer skills are rated somewhat lower but still as “important”. When analyzing these results, one must keep in mind that more than half of the survey participants (52,37%) work for the Language Service and that one prerequisite for such positions is fluency in at least two foreign languages. Therefore, the result that language skills are seen as “very important” for working at the GSC should not be labeled as an unexpected result. When comparing the different Directorates at the GSC, a more detailed picture emerges:

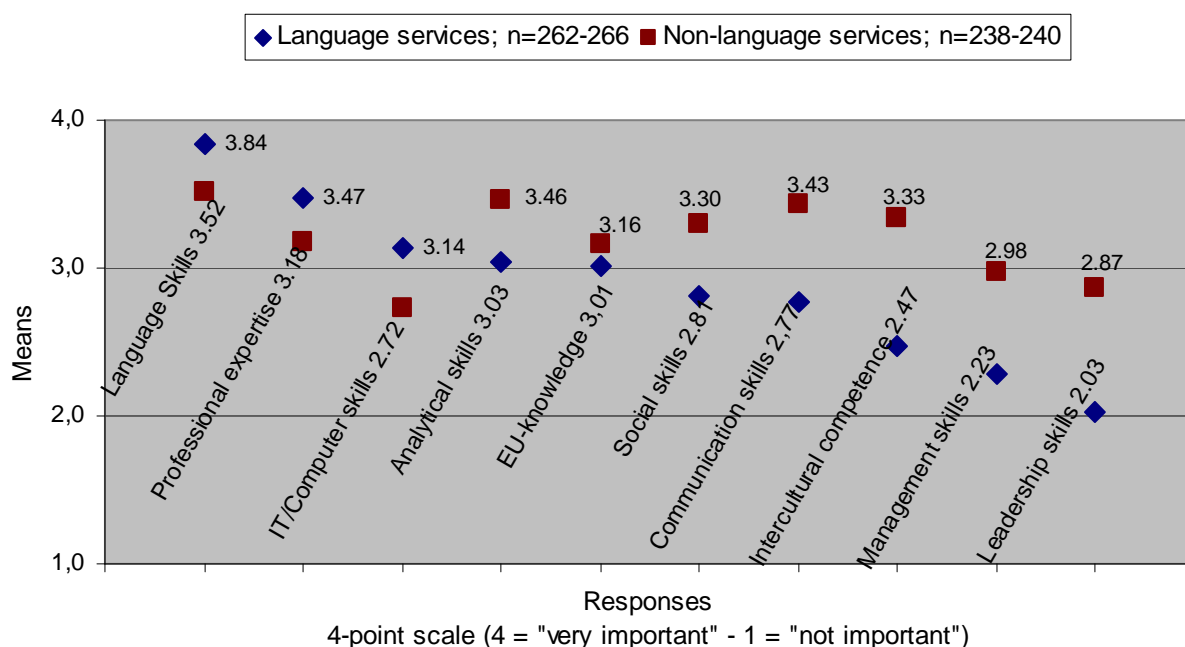


Figure 10: Necessary skills and qualifications for working at the GSC: Language Services and Non-Language Services compared

The employees of all the other organizational entities than the Language Services rated management, communication, intercultural, and leadership skills as significantly more important for working at the GSC than their colleagues from the Language Services did.⁴⁴

In addition, when comparing post categories, employees who are assigned to senior and upper management posts in grades A12-A16 evaluated analytical and intercultural skills,

⁴⁴ T-test: Group Means: Management skills: Employees of the Language Service 2.28 to employees of all other department groups 2.98, sig. 0.000. Communication skills: Employees of the Language Service 2.77 to employees of all other department groups 3.43, sig. 0.000. Intercultural skills: Employees of the Language Service 2.47 to employees of all other department groups 3.33, sig. 0.000. Leadership skills: Employees of the Language Service 2.03 to employees of all other department groups 2.87, sig. 0.000.

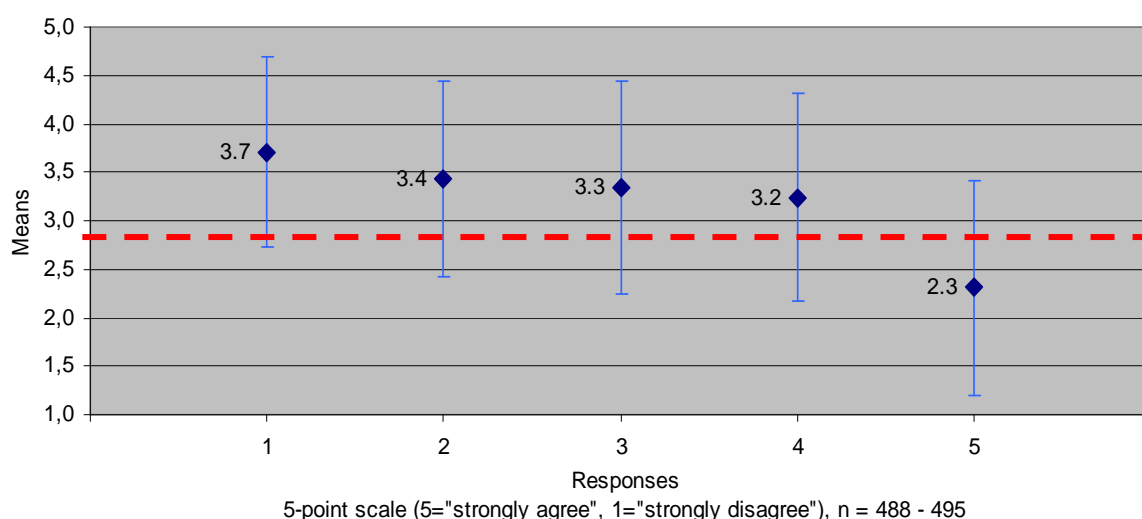
management and leadership skills as significantly more important for their current field of work as employees in lower grades (A5-A11).⁴⁵

Here, it can be concluded that language skills, management skills, communication and social skills, intercultural skills, leadership skills, professional expertise, analytical skills, detailed EU knowledge, and IT/computer skills are important for working at the GSC.

4.3.5 The selection process for the EU institutions

One part of the survey dealt with the participants' evaluation of the selection process for the EU institutions. The PROFIO research team asked the GSC employees for their opinion on the personnel selection competitions they went through before obtaining their position with the EU.

When analyzing the quantitative data presented below, it is important to mention that there are relatively large standard deviations⁴⁶. The value of the standard deviation (shown by the line beside the mean) indicate how tightly a set of values is clustered around the average of those same values. The smaller the standard deviation, the more similar the answers given by the respondents were. Therefore, in this data the participants' opinions on selection process for the EU Institutions are more diverse as the following set of data shows:



1 - The competition is a fair and objective means to select personnel; 2 - The skills I need for my work were adequately tested in the competition; 3 - My university education adequately prepared me to pass the competition, 4 - Intensive preparation (e.g. undergoing specific training) is necessary in order to pass the competition, 5 - After having passed the competition I only found a job because I took a lot of personal initiative.

Figure 11: Your opinion on the selection process for the EU institutions

⁴⁵ T-test: Group Means: Analytical skills: Grades A12-A16 3.38 to Grades A5-A11 3.17, sig. 0.006. Intercultural skills: Grades A12-A16 3.12 to Grades A5-A11 2.77, sig. 0.000. Management skills: Grades A12-A16 2.84 to Grades A5-A11 2.51, sig. 0.000. Leadership skills: Grades A12-A16 2.83 to Grades A5-A11 2.25, sig. 0.000.

⁴⁶ The standard deviation in the set of data is often between 1.00 and 1.13.

With a mean of nearly four, the recruitment competitions were said to be a fair and objective means to select personnel for EU institutions. The following statements given by survey participants in the space available for comments support this result:

"Competitions are probably the closest one can get to a fair selection process."

"I think that the competition is the best system to select personnel with the current conditions of equality and information that are required by the staff regulations and the case law of the Court."

"Open competitions are the best way to ensure the necessary human resource quality for the GSC."

However, as previously mentioned, there are also other opinions on the selection process. Critical statements made by the survey participants mainly refer to the competition procedures, the selection and evaluation criteria used for choosing suitable candidates, and human resources policies in general. Some survey participants criticized the interinstitutional recruitment organized by EPSO. They were of the opinion that each EU institutions should conduct its own competitions to better meet the specific needs for staff members and to ensure a more tailor-made recruitment for specific job profiles. The selection process was described as "random", "inefficient", and "intransparent", as it does not guarantee that the best candidates are chosen.

"Nowadays, I think it is less transparent, the selection criteria are not always adequate."

"Unjust, not transparent at all, luck is an important factor."

"The selection process is very slow and subsequent employment sometimes is only offered after years, which makes it difficult to integrate an EU job into one's career plans."

"The selection process should be improved; the competitions do not guarantee the best qualified people to be selected."

"Although the present selection can be seen as objective, it is mainly based on the idea of getting rid of candidates than to focus on finding the best ones. In particular, as the test situation does not give any indication on the person's ability to work in everyday life, the competitions produce intelligent and skilled persons which very rarely requires anything else than discipline, systematic approach, and sometimes stress tolerance."

"The EPSO selection process for the first round of translators seems to have been absolutely random. We are still quite curious what kind of professionals corrected the translations and what were the evaluation criteria, since outstanding professionals were failed with inexplicably low points, yet a small number of very poorly performing persons passed the exam and were hired. More transparency would definitely be necessary as concerns the evaluation criteria of the competitions."

"I do not think the creation of EPSO was a good move. I think the institutions should organize their own competitions, according to their proper standards."

Furthermore, even though the majority of the survey participants stated that the skills and qualifications needed for their current field of work were adequately tested in the competition, some survey participants used the space available for comments to express their disagreement. They mentioned that certain skills and competences needed for working at the GSC – in particular social, communication, and management skills – were not appropriately tested in the competition. In this context, most of them stated that the people who passed the tests with the highest marks are not necessarily the best people for the job because they may lack competences not tested in the competition. According to them, in addition to testing knowledge, the recruitment competitions should pay sufficient attention to the candidates' skills and competences in other areas:

"Any skill beyond professional and language skills are not tested. You end up with a number of intellectuals that are unable to cooperate and interact properly."

"Knowledge and capacities needed at work are not adequately tested. Better people seem to fail tests on arbitrary technicalities, real knowledge and competence is not appreciated enough".

"Skills needed for career development and teamwork were not tested."

"However, one weakness of the competition system is that it tests knowledge and neither the ability to apply it - nor the willingness to work!"

"A competition is a mere knowledge test and gives no information at all about other skills people might have (or not have) and that are just as important for a job. It also leads to having overqualified people recruited for certain jobs."

"They need to move away from their rather academic nature and try and test actual working and interpersonal skills. Scoring high on a competition is not a guarantee that the official will adapt well to the working conditions at the GSC and thus perform well."

"Too much focus on formal knowledge, not taking into account enough the attitude towards work, the prior experience and the specific qualifications needed to do a good job in a certain field."

In the online survey, the GSC employees had also the opportunity to agree or disagree with the statement whether their university education adequately prepared them to pass the competition. Overall, they stated that their university education and any additional qualification (e.g. summer schools and certificates) had been helpful for passing the competition, but in addition, they stressed the necessity of an intensive preparation (e.g. taking specific training) and the importance of gaining any sort of professional experience before joining the EU institutions. The importance of intensive preparation through specific courses was also stressed by the successful candidates interviewed.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ See section 4.2.

The following statements given in the space available for comments underline the diverse opinions within the EU Council Secretariat on how well university education prepares a person for the competition:

"The university education provides background eligibility criteria to be eligible for the competition (as does length of time working beforehand)."

"I would add that my university education was sufficient for me to pass a competition as a junior translator and that translation skills were the only ones tested."

"It was mainly my previous professional experience, more than my university education and reasonable preparation – but by no means an intensive one – that helped me to pass the exams."

Furthermore, our study has shown that the survey participants do not tend to agree with the statement that they only found a job after the competition because they took a lot of personal initiative. However, when comparing different Directorates-General and age groups at the GSC, significant differences can be found in the responses. The employees of all departments other than the Language Service agree more with the statement that personal initiative is necessary for being recruited than their colleagues from the Language Services.⁴⁸ In addition, the younger employees (26-35 years) agree significantly more with the statement that a great deal of personal initiative is necessary to find a job than the employees belonging to the age group 56-65.⁴⁹ If one relates these findings to the qualitative data collected from the interviews, the majority of successful candidates and other employees at other EU institutions who were interviewed also stressed that being proactive in terms of networking and lobbying is necessary to enhancing the opportunities for career development.

4.3.6 What can universities do best to prepare people for a career at the EU Institutions?

One of the main objectives of the PROFIO project is to design a model for the ideal educational offerings preparing students for careers in international organizations. To obtain information on how educational offerings could be improved and changed in terms of the composition of curricula, as well as teaching methods, extracurricular activities, and the combination of professional and personal skills, we asked in an open question what universities could best do to prepare people for a career at the EU institutions.

⁴⁸ T-test means: Employees of the Language Service 2.05 to employees of all other department groups 2.61, sig. 0.000.

⁴⁹ Bonferroni Test, sig. 0.000.

Integrating skills development

Overall, most of the survey participants stressed that universities should pay sufficient attention to equipping students with the following skills and competences needed for working at the EU institutions: analytical, communication, social, intercultural, language, management, and leadership skills. As training on analytical skills was mainly provided by one's university education, many people strongly recommended incorporating training courses on all other skills in the curricular of educational programs to adequately prepare students for working at the EU institutions. In this context, they particularly indicated that universities could put more emphasis on management-related requirements, such as project management, staff and team management, leadership skills, strategic planning, programming and budgeting, and problem solving. Here, many survey participants recommended that universities should focus more on "public management" than "private management" training programs, as the skills acquired for managing private companies do not necessarily apply to public administrations such as the EU institutions and other international organizations. The following statements given by the survey participants underline the importance of personal and professional development during one's university education by enhancing and promoting certain skills and competences:

"Universities should focus more on practical aspects instead of theoretical issues – the importance of 'skills' instead of 'pure knowledge'."

"Universities should provide training in effective communication (written and oral) and good training in foreign languages. They should teach students to work in a team and in a hierarchical structure."

"Universities should reward [students] more for critical thinking rather than learning by memorizing, foster presentations and class interventions, teach how to write short documents and synthetic notes, foster constructive criticism."

"In addition to high-quality education from a substantive point of view, preparing the students from managerial and leadership point of view, dealing with them as partners and colleagues instead of subordinates."

"Universities should prepare students to fulfill management tasks."

"Universities should focus less on theory, more on practice, how to cope with deadlines, focus on multilingualism and interculturalism."

"Teach them to manage themselves – how to cope in a highly politicized, uncertain environment. Teach diplomacy, tact, listening skills, negotiation skills.... Teach them to write and to speak in public. Teach them the absolute need for a good work-life balance, the need to adapt culturally but not give up their identity."

In this context, it is important to mention that most of the survey participants stated that universities as academic institutions should not limit their curricular offerings to training courses on certain skills and techniques. On the contrary: they should provide a solid

combination of both academic courses and training to equip students with both thorough knowledge in a certain field of study and a wide range of useful skills.

Moreover, with regard to the development of certain skills, the analysis of participants' responses revealed that most of them recommend that universities should enable their students to work professionally in at least two foreign languages, particularly French and English. As our study has shown, the employees from all areas besides the Language Services evaluated their university education as "less important" or "not important" in developing language skills needed for working at the GSC. This indicates the need for more foreign language courses for students in fields not directly related to translating or linguistics.

Here, when comparing the results of this study with the recommendations made by Steven Lowen, the former Director of the Bologna Centre at the John Hopkins University, in his article "Preparation of Professionals in International Affairs" (1992) to postgraduate programs which aim to train and educate professionals for the European public service, he highlighted the importance of multiple language ability as well:

*"In the past it was necessary to know English and/or French and that was sufficient. Now, as I have said to my Scandinavian friends, it is no longer enough just to add German to that. Spanish and perhaps Italian are becoming increasingly important. And it is not going to be too long before some understanding of a slavic language and Japanese is going to be necessary. This is no longer a one foreign language world, it is at least a five foreign language world."*⁵⁰

Practical and international orientation in learning

Summarizing the statements which apply to the practical orientation of educational programs, most of the survey participants have indicated that academic programs often lack a sufficient level of opportunities for practical-oriented and work-based learning which could contribute to the students' "preparedness for practice and professional life". To compensate the lack of hands-on experience, many survey participants suggested for one thing that universities should integrate extensive training periods with EU institutions or national administrations into their programs. According to them, students should have the opportunity during these periods to work on "realistic" projects with EU officials in which they learn how to read and analyze EU dossiers, write papers on concrete EU subjects, and gather relevant information on EU institutions and processes. Here, the survey participants stressed the advantage of problem- or project-oriented courses over modules which purely teach knowledge on certain EU topics without any practical outlook. In this context, other survey

⁵⁰ Low, S. (1992). Preparation of Professionals in International Affairs. Europäische Integration und öffentliche Verwaltung. R. Buchegger. Wien, Verlag Orac. **2**: p. 35.

participants mentioned that workshops or summer schools conducted by leading practitioners could also help students to take a more practical look at certain EU topics.

Another recommendation made by survey participants is that universities should organize study trips to EU institutions or meetings and conferences with EU officials or national officials involved in EU politics to inform students about the functioning of EU institutions, processes, work conditions, recruitment strategies, and selection procedures. Furthermore, many participants mentioned that mandatory internships or traineeships at the EU institutions or national administrations should be part of one's university education to develop and improve certain skills and qualities, as well as to gain essential practical and professional experience necessary for working at the EU institutions. The following statements made by the survey participants reflect these recommendations:

"They should focus on training programs involving EU officials and take into account the real conditions, not just theory."

"Universities should inform students about the internal functioning of the institutions, organize visits to EU institutions, in order for them to get a closer and more concrete insight into the way the institutions operate."

"Universities should teach how they actually work, organize excursions to institutions, have simulations of meetings/procedures, etc., give more information about possibilities for internships. In short: be more in contact with real life."

"Universities should bring the students more in contact with EU practitioners through internships both at HQ and field level, frequent visits to EU institutions or field EU presences, frequent lectures by practitioners in universities."

"They can include a six-month traineeship in a public or international organization in the students' curricula."

Concerning internships and other career development activities, some of the survey participants mentioned that universities should provide students with early support and involvement in the career-finding process by assisting them in developing a professional network, improving interviewing and résumé-writing skills, and offering career information sessions.

"Universities should regularly organize conferences with EU practitioners on substance matters as on recruitment possibilities and application strategies."

According to the survey participants, universities should not only provide students with the necessary professional competences, but also with the experience of having lived and studied abroad. In their opinion, universities should provide opportunities for students to supplement their education with joint degree and exchange programs with universities abroad or other graduate programs. According to them, universities should not only offer and support such

exchange programs; rather, it is more important for them to encourage their students to use these opportunities, as it would provide them with essential intercultural and language skills.

"Insert a part of the studies curriculum (one year) in a foreign university."

"Universities should provide and support exchange programs like Erasmus for a whole year (or more) abroad."

"They have to be more international and cooperate with fellow universities abroad."

"Universities should motivate their students to spend some time studying abroad to improve language and intercultural skills."

The importance of the personal experience of living and working abroad as an effective way of training intercultural competences and communications skills, was further mentioned by Stephen Low:

"I believe that there is no substitute for the personal experience of living abroad. There are intercultural courses which may be of some assistance but, I am convinced, the most effective way of learning this is by means of education in an international setting. They [students] acquire an ability to communicate across national, political, economic, cultural, religious, and racial boundaries; a sensitivity to other intellectual frameworks; an understanding and respect for other life styles which facilitates communication across great gulfs of difference."⁵¹

To ensure the international orientation in learning, many survey participants suggested that educational and training programs should be significantly internationalized in substance and structure. Structurally, the addition of foreign students and faculty could provide international enrichment.

Cooperating with EU institutions

Furthermore, some of the survey participants suggested that universities should encourage close academic as well as any other kind of cooperation between faculty, students, and the EU institutions. In the opinion of five participants, teaching staff and students should maintain and update their skills and knowledge through involvement of EU officials. Two participants mentioned that there should even be a constant evaluation of educational programs by EU officials to ensure the appropriateness in providing students with the most necessary knowledge and skills. They believe that academic programs should demonstrate responsiveness to new developments in the field of study by incorporating and building on

⁵¹ Low, S. (1992). Preparation of Professionals in International Affairs. Europäische Integration und öffentliche Verwaltung. R. Buchegger. Wien, Verlag Orac. **2**: p. 36.

practical and professional experiences. The following statements given by the survey participants underline the importance of such cooperation:

"Universities should be in contact with the responsible people at the EU institutions and listen to their experience and comments."

"It's crucial that the universities take into account the real tasks and challenges a specific career field includes and, in cooperation with the institutions, develop adequate curricula to prepare students to live up to those tasks and challenges."

Content, teaching methods, and faculty

As for the actual content of academic programs, most of the survey participants strongly recommended that the following subjects, mostly EU-related, should be covered: EU politics, law, and economics; the function, role and power of EU Institutions; EU administration; European history, culture, and religion; constitutional, international, and national law; international politics and economics. They said in particular that students should acquire basic knowledge of the nature and functions of the EU institutions, an understanding of the role the EU institutions play in the development of the European Union and international law and policy; and the ability to think critically about the significance of the European Union to contemporary world affairs. Here are some of the comments made to this effect:

"Provide something like a general course on the EU institutions (role, functioning, powers, etc)."

"They could provide detailed courses on the institutional structure and legislative procedures, and they could encourage contact with the institutions."

"EU is a sui generis legal structure. Law is therefore essential, esp. constitutional, international and federal law. EU is primarily about trade, so international trade and economics is the second major streak. Only after having grasped these essentials is it worth examining the political and policy issues."

"For a start they could integrate modules on EU public service as part of some courses, such as those related to European affairs. They could also integrate credits on EU language policy and legal drafting in the languages and in the law faculties."

When relating these results to the recommendations made by Stephen Low regarding postgraduate programs, one can see that he also stressed that professionals in the new (post-Maastricht) European public service need to know the whole EC structure, its organizations, laws, growing treaty structure and Brussels bureaucracy as well. In addition, he highlighted:

"To be able to deal with the complexity of new Europe some political theory, for instance, will be necessary in order to be able to make sense of it all; to categorize and understand the advantages and limitations of each system. The same, of course, goes

*for theoretical economics, trade and monetary policy, which will become necessary in order to avoid becoming overwhelmed.*⁵²

In the opinion of some survey participants, educational programs should include opportunities for synthesis, application, and integration of knowledge within and between disciplines. Here, the importance of interdisciplinarity of educational programs is stressed. Sufficient flexibility to allow students to choose courses according to their own interests within and outside their major discipline should be provided.

"In general, give the possibility to combine studies from different departments like humanities, political science, law, and economics. A too narrow education field narrows the mind."

"Universities could therefore envisage flexible forms of MA courses or other intermediary forms of postgraduate courses which would be open to people from other fields not always relevant to politics or law (e.g. languages) and would be less demanding than the traditional MA route."

Stephen Low further stressed the importance of the interdisciplinarity of postgraduate programs in preparing students for the European public service, as highly trained specialists with very sophisticated knowledge in the narrow fields mentioned are introduced to the basics of other disciplines. In this context, he stated:

*"Teaching micro-economics to a sophisticated lawyer or providing a survey of history to an advanced economist presents problems. But it seems absolutely necessary to do so if these two groups are going to function effectively under the new conditions."*⁵³

Concerning teaching methods, many survey participants strongly recommended the following methods: case studies, simulations, workshops, and team work or hands-on projects. According to them, universities should incorporate a variety of modes of instruction so that a fruitful balance between knowledge-based and problem-or project-based learning is ensured. Some of the survey participants mentioned that case studies or simulations as active learning methods would enable students to experience through the eyes of actual participants the kind of problem which they may confront in their future professional life at the EU institutions. A professional education focused on real-world problems would be ensured, as well as the training of problem-solving skills.

⁵² Low, S. (1992). Preparation of Professionals in International Affairs. Europäische Integration und öffentliche Verwaltung. R. Buchegger. Wien, Verlag Orac. **2**: p. 34.

⁵³ Low, S. (1992). Preparation of Professionals in International Affairs. Europäische Integration und öffentliche Verwaltung. R. Buchegger. Wien, Verlag Orac. **2**: p. 35.

In terms of the faculty, some of the survey participants mentioned that teachers involved in academic programs should be well-qualified; i.e., have the appropriate academic and/or professional qualifications to support and develop the program.

“Use good, dedicated, healthy and generally unfrustrated teachers to make students interested, curious, passionate, versatile, broad- and free minded individuals, rather than suffocate them with lifeless information.”

In conclusion, the participants' recommendations have shown that universities could do more to prepare students for careers at the EU institutions. With regard to the composition of curricula, universities should pay more attention to teaching the skills and competences (communication, social, intercultural, language, management, and leadership skills) essential for working at international organizations such as the EU. There should be a healthy balance between modules which concentrate on knowledge-transfer and modules which aim for the development and improvement of certain skills and competences. In this case, the implementation of active and problem-based teaching methods was said to be the best method to equip students with the skills and competences needed. Furthermore, any kind of cooperation between universities and EU institutions or other international organizations is helpful and even necessary to ensure the practical and professional outlook of educational programs which aim to prepare students for work at international organizations.

Besides obtaining useful information from the data collected on how educational offerings could be improved and changed, the analysis of the participants' responses also revealed that some of the survey participants do not see the role of universities in preparing students for a career in international organizations, since they are academic institutions and not training or vocational centers. The following statements voice the opinion that universities should preserve their traditional roles such as conservators of culture, heritage, and values and transmitters of knowledge:

“The best thing universities could do in that respect, is not to think about careers in EU institutions for their students at all, but value their 'core business' above all: academic freedom, scientific research and teaching responsibilities for those involved in scientific research. A university is not a school for managers, but a temple of knowledge, in the broadest sense.”

“I do not think it is the role of university to prepare specifically to a career in EU institutions Training youngsters with good analytical skills, broad knowledge, openness to other ideas/cultures and capacity to adapt to changing environment and professional challenges seems to me more important than a specific dedicated training.”

“I don't think it is a good idea for universities to focus on careers at EU institutions when establishing the curriculum for the basic bachelor and master degrees. It's useless to focus people's basic training on such limited career perspectives as a job in an EU institution.”

“Universities are not preparation schools. Universities are supposed to have a triple mission: (a) organize the transfer of specialized knowledge to the students, (b) provide students with the intellectual tools and structure necessary to render them capable to analyze situations and shape responses accordingly, and (c) encourage socially responsible decision-making and wider engagement with the society.”

5 Conclusion

The main objectives of this study were to gain insight into the recruitment policies and processes and collect detailed information on the educational and professional background of employees of the EU institutions. Another aim was to obtain useful recommendations for educational institutions on how to best prepare students for careers at EU institutions. A combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods was applied to achieve the stated objectives. In the following, the main findings of this study are summarized.

The results of this study have shown that the personnel selection competitions were evaluated as a fair and objective means of selecting personnel for the EU institutions. However, our study has also demonstrated that some people are critical of the selection and evaluation criteria used for choosing suitable candidates, the concept of interinstitutional recruitment, and human resources policies in general. This study highlighted that the recruitment competitions could be better at testing social, communication, and management skills, as these are the skills needed for working at the EU institutions. In addition, successful candidates and young employees stated that a great deal of personal initiative – networking and lobbying – is necessary to find a job after having passed the competition. With regard to the preparation, university education was to be seen as helpful, but intensive preparation through specific courses was necessary to pass the competition. Here, the German survey participants explicitly indicated that the preparatory courses offered by the Foreign Ministry are a good way to prepare for the competitions.

The analysis of quantitative and qualitative data has shown that the subjects employees studied most often for their highest degrees were foreign languages, law, political science, business, economics, and international studies. The majority of our survey participants and interview partners were quite content with what they learned at university and how it prepared them for their current field of work. The qualitative data collected from the interviews highlighted that particularly a combination of law and political science (including international affairs and public policy) seems to be a good preparation in that it provides one with the skills and qualifications – analytical skills and detailed knowledge on EU institutions and processes – needed for passing the competition and working at the EU institutions. In terms of professional

backgrounds, the study has shown that work experience in the public and private sectors is seen to be helpful in preparing for a career at the EU.

With regard to the skills and qualifications necessary for working at the EU institutions, this study has identified that analytical skills, management skills, communication skills, social skills, language skills, intercultural skills, leadership skills, and IT/computer skills are important to perform the various tasks in professional positions at the EU institutions and that universities should do their part in developing and improving these skills. Our results have shown that there is a particularly need for training in management skills, language skills, IT/computer skills and communications skills.⁵⁴

As the employees have pointed out, universities should provide professional education that not only adheres to the highest standards of scholarship but also takes a practical approach to training students for international leadership. One recommendation was that universities should include skills development within their curriculum, as this would ensure that students acquire not only a thorough knowledge of the subject they are studying but also the skills people need for working in an international environment. Universities should reduce the weight of specialized knowledge-oriented modules in relation to management- and skills-oriented modules. Through case studies, workshops, simulations, hands-on projects developed and conducted by leading academics and practitioners, extensive training sessions, internships or traineeships at the EU institutions, and research or consulting projects in cooperation with the EU, students should gain the professional exposure they need for working at the EU institutions. Practitioners should not only be involved in the actual teaching process, but also in the development and evaluation of educational programs to ensure that students are provided with the most necessary skills and knowledge. Finally, universities should offer services which assist students in developing their careers.

⁵⁴ The responses from the Language Service employees are excluded here.

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Appendix 1 – Organizational entities of the four EU institutions studied

Organization of the Council of Ministers (Source: IDEA <europa.eu.int/idea>).

Representatives of the governments of the Member States who regularly take part in Council meetings

Permanent Representatives Committee

Part 2 (Coreper II)

Part 1 (Coreper I)

Permanent Representations

General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union

Secretary-General

Deputy Secretary-General

Legal Service

Directorate-General A - Personnel and Administration

Directorate-General B - Agriculture , fisheries

Directorate-General C - Internal market, Competitiveness, Industry, Research, Energy, Transport, Information society

Directorate-General E - External economic relations, common foreign and security policy

Directorate-General F - Press, communication, protocol

Directorate-General G - Economic and social affairs

Directorate-General H - Justice and home affairs

Directorate-General I - Protection of the environment and consumers, Civil protection, Health, Foodstuffs, Education, Youth, Culture, Audiovisual

Association Councils

Cooperation Councils

Council of Ministers of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) States - European Community

European Union Satellite Centre

European Union Institute for Security Studies

Committee of Senior Officials on Scientific and Technical Research (COST)

Organization of the European Commission (Source: IDEA <europa.eu.int/idea>)

Secretariat-General

Directorate A - Registry and Commission decision-making process
 Directorate B - Relations with civil society
 Directorate C - Programming and administrative coordination
 Directorate D - Policy coordination
 Directorate E - Resources and general matters
 Directorate F - Relations with the Council
 Directorate G - Relations with the European Parliament, the European Ombudsman, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and National Parliaments
 Directorate H - Institutional matters

Legal Service

Directorate-General for Press and Communication

Directorate A – Information and Communication Strategies and Policies
 Directorate B – Communication, media and services
 Directorate C – Resources

Bureau of European Policy Advisers (BEPA)

Eurostat

Personnel and Administration DG

DIGIT - Directorate-General for Informatics

Budget DG

Internal audit service

European Anti-Fraud Office

Interpretation DG

DG Translation

Publications Office

Joint Research Centre

OIB - Office for Infrastructure and Logistics - Brussels

OIL - Office for Infrastructure and Logistics - Luxembourg

PMO - Office for administration and payment of individual entitlements

EPSO - European Personnel Selection Office

External delegations, representations and offices

Political DGs

Economic and Financial Affairs DG
 Enterprise and Industry DG
 Competition DG
 Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities DG
 Agriculture and Rural Development DG
 Energy and Transport DG
 Environment DG
 Research DG
 Information Society & Media DG
 Fisheries and Maritime Affairs DG
 Internal Market and Services DG

Regional Policy DG
 Taxation and Customs Union DG
 Education and Culture DG
 Health and Consumer Protection DG
 Justice, Freedom and Security DG
 External Relations DG
 Trade DG
 Development DG
 Enlargement DG
 Europe Aid Cooperation Office
 Humanitarian Aid DG (ECHO)

Organization of the European Parliament (Source: IDEA <europa.eu.int/idea>).**Members of the European Parliament (MEPs)**

- Governing bodies
- Political groups
- Committees
- Temporary committees
- Interparliamentary delegations
- Delegation to the joint parliamentary committee

Secretariat

- Secretary-General
- Legal Service
- Directorate-General 1 - Presidency
- Directorate-General 2 - Internal Policies of the Union
- Directorate-General 3 - External policies
- Directorate-General 4 - Information
- Directorate-General 5 - Personnel
- Directorate-General 6 - Infrastructure and Interpretation
- Directorate-General 7 - Translation and Publishing
- Directorate-General 8 - Finance

Political Group Secretariats

- PPE-DE: Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats
- PSE: Group of the Party of European Socialists
- Greens/EFA: The Greens/European Free Alliance
- GUE/NGL: Confederal Group of the European United Left/Nordic Green Left
- UEN: Union for Europe of the Nations Group
- NA: group of non-attached Members
- IND/DEM: Independence/Democracy Group
- ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe

Organization of the Committee of the Regions (Source: IDEA [ibid.]).**Bureau of the Committee of the Regions****Members of the Committee****Alternate Members****Commissions of the Committee of the Regions****Secretariat-General of the Committee of the Regions**

- Chairman's Private Office
- Secretariat-General
- Internal Audit Service
- Unit for Press, Information, Communication and Events
- Political Group Secretariats
- Directorate for Administration
- Directorate for Consultative Work
- Directorate for Registry, Legal Affairs and Assistance to Members

Joint Services of the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions

- Logistics and translation
- Planning and management
- Medical/welfare department
- Infrastructure and new buildings
- Meetings and internal services
- IT and telecommunications
- Printing/Distribution
- Coordination of the production chain
- Translation and transcription (for all official languages of the EU)

Appendix 2 – Sample topic guide

Interviews at the Council Secretariat – Topic Guide for Employees

Key interests:

- Background of interviewee
- Motivation for recent career
- Field, content, and methods of work
- Satisfaction with job
- Recommendations for future employees

Introduction

- Introduce ourselves and the PROFIO project
- Explain interest of interview and what it will be about
 - Project to improve university education for IOs
 - Give potential applicants advice on how to do a career in an IO and on what will be expected from them
 - Study in Council Secretariat: Determine what the reality of working in an organization such as this one is like
- Guarantee anonymity
- Ask for permission to record the interview
 - Switch on voice recorder and have paper and pencil ready to take notes

Background of interviewee

Could you please describe your educational background and work experience before starting to work at the Council Secretariat?

- 'CV' (university education, etc.)
- Career until now

Work at the Council Secretariat

Could you please describe how you came to work for the Council Secretariat?

- What was your motivation for a career at the EU?
- Why and how did you apply to the GSC?
- Application process (experiences)
- What do you believe were the reasons you were hired?
- What were your initial expectations when starting to work for the GSC?

Could you please describe your work in the Council Secretariat so far?

- When did you start to work for the GSC? For the EU?
- Did you have different posts before the current one? Which positions have you had so far?
- How did change in position take place (promotion or application to other post)?

Could you please describe your current job in terms of content, tasks, and methods of work?

- What is the position and function of the interviewee within the organisation?
- What are the tasks you are responsible for?
- Which skills are centrally needed for the work in the Council Secretariat?

Overall – how satisfied are you with your work at the Council Secretariat?

- Were your original expectations fulfilled?
- Evaluation of career opportunities within organization
- Evaluation of career progression in terms of job responsibilities and content
- Evaluation of working environment
- Evaluation of financial aspects
- Do you feel that your contribution is adequately appreciated?

Recommendations for future applicants

Concerning the central aim of the research project PROFIO to improve educational programs in preparing potential candidates for a career in an IO:

- Evaluation of own university education
 - What was good?
 - What was lacking?
- How would you describe what the work at the Council Secretariat is like to someone who is interested in working there?
- What would you recommend to future applicants?